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LANDSCAPE

LANDSCAPE

BY

Philip Gilbert Hamerton

AUTHOR OF

'ETCHING AND ETCHERS,' 'THE GRAPHIC ARTS,'

&c. &c. &c.

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ae.

With Original ETCHINGS

and many ILLUSTRATIONS from PICTURES and DRAWINGS

'Straight mine eye hath caught new pleasures
While the landscape round it measures;
Russet lawns, and fallows gray,
Where the nibbling flocks do stray;
Mountains, on whose barren breast
The labouring clouds do often rest;
Meadows trim, with daisies pied,
Shallow brooks and rivers wide;
Towers, and battlements it sees
Bosomed high in tufted trees,
Where perhaps some beauty lies
The cynosure of neighbouring eyes.'

MILTON (*L'Allegro*).

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PREFACE.

IT may be well to say a few words in this place about the intention of the present work. It is not intended to be a treatise on landscape-painting, either from the technical or the aesthetic side, nor is it by any means exclusively a treatise on landscape in nature. My dominant idea has been the influence of natural landscape upon man, and I may without much presumption suppose myself to be in some degree fitted to write a book on such a theme, because the influence of natural landscape upon myself has always been extremely powerful, and I have always been deeply interested in observing how it affected others. I perceive, for example, that one very intelligent and cultivated person looks upon mountain scenery with an indifference that would certainly pass into dislike if he were compelled to live in the midst of it, whilst another lives in a perpetual state of lively interest in a mountainous country and feels dull only in the plains. The effect of the sea upon some minds is extremely depressing; others find it to be a tonic and a stimulant. I remember a story of a woman who worked in a cotton factory in one of the great manufacturing towns of Lancashire, and who went in an excursion to the coast. When she first saw the expanse of the Irish Sea, which looks as unlimited as the ocean, she exclaimed, 'At last here is something that there is enough of!' She had suffered from restriction, confinement, insufficiency, all her days, but there, at last, she could feel the greatness of nature. It may have been in her constitution, as in that of the painter Fromentin, to delight in boundlessness. His passion was for the African desert. Others have a dislike for large spaces, and shelter themselves against what seems to them the oppressive greatness of the world in little protected nooks. You see both tendencies unconsciously revealed in the selection of sites for houses. One builder sets his dwelling upon a hill and says that he likes the view, another builds down in the bottom of some hollow and says

that he likes a shelter from the wind. In reality the reasons lie far deeper than any mere preference for a particular landscape or love of stagnant air.

Two very powerful opposites are the desire for wildness and the desire for the evidence of human labour. The first finds its satisfaction on Highland moors, amongst rocks and heather and free streams; the second in the highly cultivated fields of southern England, or, still better, in lawns and garden walks. The lover of wildness always feels confined amongst the evidences of a minutely careful civilisation; the lover of high artificial finish feels out of place in wild landscape, and as if he were deprived of his usual comforts and conveniences.

Another contrast, which is evidently connected with feelings that lie in the depths of human nature, is that between the love of changeful and often stormy weather, with strong transient effects of the most varied character, and the love of placid sunshine, bright from day to day, with an assured yet monotonous brightness.

These slight indications may help the reader to enter into the leading idea of the book. In writing it I have been guided by two principal considerations. Well knowing that the impressions we receive from landscape are always the result of our own idiosyncrasy as much as of the external nature that affects it, I felt bound to let personal preferences be frequently though not obtrusively visible. On the other hand, as I had to do with the influence of landscape on minds of the most various orders, it was necessary that I should enter into feelings very different from my own, at least enough to understand them; and, therefore, my book could not be simply an expression of personal thoughts and affections, as, for example, was the *Painter's Camp*, which owed its success to the personal element exclusively.

I have noticed in some reviewers, both in England and America, but principally in the United States, a tendency to compare my writings with those of a much more celebrated author who preceded me in the same field. This is sometimes done with an intention friendly to myself, and sometimes as a means of depreciating what I have written. It is not difficult to foresee that the present volume is likely to recall *Modern Painters* by its subject, so that it may be well that I should explain, in a few words, what has been the influence of Mr. Ruskin on my work. So

far as the study of nature is concerned it has always been, and still is, a powerful and a delightful influence. Mr. Ruskin has always united, in his study of nature, affectionate insight with intimate knowledge to a degree hardly ever found except among painters,—and in them, although the affection may be as great, the knowledge is not exactly of the same kind. With regard to art, I find myself more frequently in sympathy with artists than with Mr. Ruskin, especially on technical matters, which I have treated elsewhere and need not enter into here. I need only say that if he had influenced me I should have excluded all etchings from this volume and all engravings in which light-and-shade is attempted. Mr. Ruskin's perception of the beauty of nature is so delicate, and his love of nature so strong, that he is often offended by what appears to him coarseness in human work, when artists only see in it a convenient and accepted means of expression.*

It is one of the advantages of expensive editions that they allow a book to be illustrated in a manner that is not possible in cheaper ones. In the present volume I have taken full advantage of this in giving the reader as varied a set of illustrations as the publishers and myself could get together, our leading object having always been to illustrate the whole subject as equally as we could, though in very different ways. By the permission of Mr. Agnew a magnificent Turner in his private gallery has been engraved, for the first time, in line by Mr. Brandard; and as Mr. Agnew most kindly gave every facility for the execution of the plate, it is probably as near to the original as any engraving on such a reduced scale can be. My friend Professor Oliver, of Kew, who has a fine collection of drawings by Mr. Alfred Hunt, willingly lent one of the finest, the view of Thun, to be interpreted by the same engraver; and I think this plate is as good an example of delicacy and repose as the other of unrest. M. Brunet-Debaines has engraved in mezzotint Turner's 'St. Denis,' a drawing that originally appeared in the *Rivers of France*, where it was

* The existence of *Modern Painters* has sometimes caused me to treat a subject very briefly. For example, I have not said much about the landscape descriptions in Scott because Mr. Ruskin had said nearly all that was necessary on the subject, and said it well. I have simply added, in this instance, the remark, that since Scott's time a new development of description has taken place in consequence of a recent culture derived from the art of painting. I have not thought it necessary, for the same reason, to go much into the subject of mediaeval landscape, having done little more than show how the landscape of Ariosto is derived from it.

to a certain extent altered for the engraver. Another mezzotint plate is a landscape with hill and cloud by Girtin, engraved by S. W. Reynolds, and which has remained hitherto unpublished. I need do no more with reference to the etchings than allude to the contributions of men so well known as Lalanne and Brunet-Debaines amongst Frenchmen or Slocombe and Heywood Hardy amongst our own countrymen. Mr. Colin Hunter is best known as a painter, but he sometimes sketches on copper, as other distinguished painters have done in former ages; and he kindly consented to execute one of his sketches for this volume. The careful interpretation by Mr. Murray of a small picture by Landseer is an etching of quite a different character; but I am not sorry to give examples that prove the various capabilities of an art that I have sometimes defended. I have also been able to give examples of different nationalities in etching, including two plates by Mr. Pennell and Mr. Parrish, who efficiently represent the American school and have done me the favour to contribute.

Although this is not a technical treatise, the reader must allow me a degree of liberty in this preface for a most necessary explanation on a technical matter, the employment of what are known as the photographic processes of engraving. The ideas generally prevalent on this subject are erroneous, because a false idea when it is extremely simple gains currency much more easily than a true idea which is rather complicated. The simple false idea in this case is, that what are called in a general way 'process engravings' are mechanical works done by the application of some scientific process; and when such works are published along with burin engravings, as in the *Graphic Arts* and the present volume, a confusion is established which causes many people to call the burin engravings 'process prints' also. Besides these ideas there is another, that 'a process print,' as people call it, is in some mysterious way always to be considered an inferior thing, however beautiful it may look. I will consider these errors separately.

First, with regard to the notion that a heliogravure, for example, is a mechanical affair done by a photographic apparatus, let me mention, as a case in point, the reproduction of pen-drawings by Mr. George Reid, the Scottish Academician. Mr. Reid, it is hardly necessary to say, is a very delicate draughtsman, who unites in a very rare degree the love of truth and a fine taste in the presentation of a subject. He is not

an etcher, and consequently his drawings would be known only to a few if they could not be reproduced by some sufficiently faithful process. Thanks to modern discoveries they can be reproduced in two ways, one to print as etchings are printed, the other to print in the text like wood-cuts. Let me briefly explain exactly what photography does in the first instance. It simply serves to transfer the drawing to a sensitised gelatine film on a copper-plate. M. Amand Durand then washes out the gelatine from the lines, and bites the plate exactly as an etcher does. In case of necessity he retouches the lines with the burin or point, being himself an accomplished engraver. To describe one of these etchings as a 'photograph' is to convey a false impression to the uninitiated. It is an etching drawn by Mr. Reid, traced by photography, and etched by Amand Durand. It is not even reduced by photography, as the etching is the exact size of the original. Nor has Amand Durand anything to do with the photographic part of the work, which is done for him by an ordinary photographer; he is purely an etcher and engraver. The truest statement of the case is that the so-called 'heliogravure' is an etching, and just as much an etching as an original copper by Rembrandt, the only difference being that it is drawn by one artist and bitten by another. Photography only serves as a convenient intermediary between the two artists by giving a tracing of peculiarly accurate kind.

In cases of this kind the original drawing may be made to look like a free-pen drawing, as were the sketches of Venice, by Mr. Pennell, in the *Portfolio;* or it may be made in the style of an etching, like Mr. Henry Moore's drawing, 'The Beached Margent of the Sea.' As the reproduction is really an etching it then looks exactly as if the artist had himself bitten it in the copper. In the case of the plate just mentioned photography has nothing to do either with the drawing, which is Mr. Moore's work, or with the biting, which is Dujardin's work, as etcher and chemist.

Now, suppose we inquire a little into the history of such a plate as that by Dujardin from Samuel Palmer. Some careless critic may describe it as a photograph. I wish he could see the photograph that is lying on my table. There is, to begin with, hardly a trace of the sky, except two very faint streaks of cloud near the building. In the photograph some of the details are unsound and broken up, so that they want massing, others have disappeared and must be restored. Besides this the whole

tonic scheme of the drawing is upset, because the values of the yellows and blues are reversed. Thanks to the care and skill of Mr. A. H. Palmer, the photograph has been so worked upon from the original drawing that M. Dujardin's plate (which is an aquatint more or less aided by photography) is incomparably nearer to the original than the first negative.* Mr. Dawson's heliogravure of the Windmill, by Linnell, is by no means a mechanical reproduction, it has cost much labour of a purely artistic kind, and gives evidence, I think, of much artistic feeling. The heliogravure from Macculloch's picture of 'The Silver Strand, Loch Katrine,' was carefully worked upon by Mr. C. O. Murray, and owes much to his patience and skill.

In the photogravure of the landscape, by Huysmans de Malines, the cracks of the original picture have left some trace; but it was not thought necessary to exclude a beautiful work on that account from the book any more than one would exclude a cracked picture from a gallery.

I ought not to pass the subject of photogravure without mentioning the illustration after Mr. Peter Graham's well-known picture, 'The Spate in the Highlands.' I always had an especial admiration for that picture, due to an intimate acquaintance with what Nature does in that way; and it is a great satisfaction to me that, by the kind consent of the present owner, Mr. Cunliffe Brooks, of Barlow Hall, I am able to give a reproduction, though without the truthful colour of the original, and on a scale which must inevitably enfeeble the impression.

I have only to add, in order to do complete justice to these processes, that a photographic engraving, intelligently dealt with, sometimes comes nearer than any other kind of engraving to the qualities of the original picture. The reader is well aware that I am not likely to depreciate the merits either of line-engraving or etching, but I do not hesitate to say that no line-engraver, or etcher either, ever came so near to the qualities of Corot's manner of painting as Dujardin's heliogravures in this volume. I may especially mention 'Mantes la Jolie,' which has so much of Corot's

* In the illustrations to the *Eclogues* of Virgil there is a plate by M. Dujardin, after a drawing by Samuel Palmer (opposite page 20), and on this plate Mr. A. H. Palmer spent three weeks of careful labour in etching and engraving, after M. Dujardin had done with it. Yet still it has to be classed as a heliogravure, because it would not be strictly honest to deny to Helios his small share of the performance.

quality that it is almost as if we saw the painting itself, one of the prettiest and most characteristic of Corot's works. This is an example of successful reproduction where there is little detail; and in contrast to it I may mention the reproduction of Van Eyck's 'Vierge au Donateur,' which would not have been so completely successful without a degree of fidelity to extremely minute detail in which the assistance of photography is invaluable, and not to be replaced by any degree of manual skill. To reject the help of these processes, when they can do the thing we require better than any other methods known to us, would be worse than any common error of judgment, it would be pure stupidity.

The mention of Corot's works reminds me of the thanks that I owe to Messrs. Arnold and Tripp, the English picture-dealers in Paris,* who in the year 1883 had in their possession the finest collection of Corot's works I ever met with, and kindly permitted me to study all their pictures at my ease, and to select those which I desired to have reproduced. The two Corots, the Daubigny, and the Harpignies engraved or etched for this volume, belonged to Messrs. Arnold and Tripp.

The etching of birch-trees by Mr. Slocombe reproduces with some variations the design of a large plate etched by him for the Fine Art Society, and is published by their permission.

My own share in the illustration of the book is, intentionally, quite subordinate. It seemed to me that a few simple pen-drawings of a topographic kind were needed to explain some points, and as professional artists avoid topographic work I undertook it myself. There is this curious difference between literature and graphic art, that whereas in literature a plain, straightforward statement of something that is true has a fair chance of receiving unprejudiced attention, a drawing is generally despised unless it is pretty, and a pretty drawing is sure to be admired, however unfaithful it may be. But when a drawing is simply explanatory what does it signify whether it is admired or not? the purpose of it is not to provoke the customary compliment, but to make some matter plainer than it could have been without its help.

Whenever a writer treats of a subject which is in its nature infinite he must expect to be told that he has omitted this thing and that. There are, of course, many omissions in this volume. The illustrations

* Rue St. Georges.

do not fully represent either the phenomena of nature or the labours of the most celebrated landscape-painters, nor do they even attempt to represent them in any strictly proportionate way. Thus, we have seven Turners and only a single Claude, the Claude not being representative of his pictures, but only of his slighter drawings; and we have not a single Ruysdael, Poussin, Salvator, or even English Constable. The same kind of criticism might be applied, with even more telling effect, to our illustration of the infinite field of nature. There is only one definite study of a special kind of tree, Mr. Slocombe's birches, and the science of geology has no special series of illustrations. I need only observe that the attempt to make a book of this limited extent at all strictly representative of art and nature would be a vain pretence at the best, and only hamper the author without attaining the proposed object. Such an object could, in fact, only be attained in an extensive and formally-divided Encyclopedia.

THE FARMYARD

Water-colour Drawing by SAMUEL PALMER

Reproduced in Photogravure by *DUJARDIN*

This drawing illustrates various matters treated in different parts of the volume. It is an interesting example of the picturesque in English farm-buildings, especially characteristic of the south of England. It shows the artistic value of a windmill on a height (the reader may compare the Linnell) and the importance of figures and cattle in the foreground of a subject connected with human industry. The reader will observe how much the whole subject gains in dignity from the great mass of cumulus cloud and from the generally grand arrangement of the sky.

LANDSCAPE

CHAPTER I.

A Definition attempted.

IT might readily be imagined that landscape was a word of mongrel derivation, the first half obviously the English *land*, the second half perhaps a corrupted form of *scope*, from σκοπή or σκόπησις and σκέπτομαι, like the second half of telescope and microscope. In fact, however, it appears that both parts of the word landscape are of northern origin, and are to be found in the Anglo-Saxon *landscipe*, of which the old English form landskip has preserved the vowel. It appears, too, that *scipe* or *skip* is the same as *ship* in friendship, and means the state or condition of being, like the German termination *schaft* in *landschaft* and a multitude of other words. So it happens that 'landskip' with its letter *i* recalls the Anglo-Saxon form, whilst our present 'landscape' with its letter *a* approaches more nearly to the German and Swedish, neither of them having anything to do with *scope* or view. Possibly, however, some learned etymologist may trace an ultimate connexion between the Swedish *skap* and the Greek σκοπή, but I do not pretend to go so far back. It is enough for our present purpose to know that landscape is a good, sound, northern word in both its parts, and that our forefathers, who used the now obsolete form 'landskip,' were not guilty of any fault of spelling, but kept more closely than we do to the ancient *scipe*. 'Landskip' has been revived by Tennyson both in verse and prose. In the present volume the prevalent form, landscape, will be adhered to, both because we moderns are more accustomed to it and because it finishes less abruptly.

We use the word in two distinct senses, a general and a particular. In the general sense, the word landscape without the article means the visible material world, all that can be seen on the surface of the earth

by a man who is himself upon the surface; and in the special sense, *a* landscape means a piece of the earth's surface that can be seen at once, and it is always understood that this piece will have a certain artistic unity or suggestion of unity in itself.

Although the word refers to the natural land, it does not exclude any human works that are upon the land. A landscape-painter is not confined to the works of Nature. If he paints a river, he may also represent the bridges that span it and the castles or cities that are erected on its banks. In its general sense, *landscape* is also understood to include lakes, and even the sea, because land and water are often visible at the same time. Strictly speaking, a view of the open sea, far out of sight of any shore, can hardly be called a landscape—it is a waterscape; but for the sake of convenience the generic term *landscape* is supposed to include everything that is seen upon the surface of the globe.

Views from the summits of lofty mountains or from a balloon may come under the term *landscape;* but they are hardly landscapes, they are panoramas. Even in the flattest country, or in the midst of the ocean, we may see mountain scenery of the greatest magnificence when there is a full moon; but as the lunar mountains and valleys are only visible to us from above (if there are such relations as above and below between planet and planet), we are, as it were, up in a balloon at a tremendous height, whence we look down into the lunar valleys, and we see them in such a way that not one of the great circuses—Tycho, Tacitus, Abulfeda—constitutes, for us, a landscape. Whenever an attempt has been made to represent the landscapes of the moon, the draughtsman has supposed himself there with his stool, and drawing the clear sharp details of the cloudless mountains in the unbreathable ether. A landscape always supposes the personal presence of a human observer. When Milton's Raphael wings his flight between the 'angelic quires' and out through the open gate of Heaven, he first sees Earth as a distant star, then her lands appear

> 'As when by night the glass
> Of Galileo, less assured, observes
> Imagined lands and regions in the moon.'

This is not landscape yet, but astronomy. The next comparison brings us nearer to landscape:—

> 'Or pilot, from amidst the Cyclades,
> Delos or Samos first appearing, kens
> A cloudy spot.'

Gradually the flying angel comes

> 'within soar
> Of towering eagles.'

After that we have the real terrestrial landscape, when

> 'on the Eastern cliff of Paradise
> He lights;
> * * * * *
> and now is come
> Into the blissful field, through groves of myrrh,
> And flowering odours, cassia, nard, and balm;
> A wilderness of sweets.'

This, at last, is the landscape that we know, a place where there is a cliff, and a field, and odorous groves. Here our human spirit, after the strain of effort in following the far flight of Raphael as he 'sails between worlds and worlds,' alights with profound contentment. We are on the earth as it is known to us, the dear land we were born upon and where all our years have passed. Not that it is all a paradise, but there are paradises in it still.

By the help of our modern knowledge we may imagine the approach to the earth as it would appear to one of us if he were permitted to fly like Raphael through inter-stellar space. It would first become visible as a mere point of light, then as a remote planet appears to us; after that it would shine and dazzle like Venus; then we should begin to see its geography as we do that of the moon; and at last, when we come within three terrestrial diameters, or about twenty thousand miles, we should distinguish the white icy poles, the vast blue oceans, the continents and larger islands glistening like gold in the sunshine, and the silver-bright wandering fields of cloud. Nearer still, we should see the fresh green of Britain and Ireland, the dark greens of Norwegian and Siberian forests, the greyer and browner hues of countries parched by the sun, the shining courses of the great rivers. All this would be intensely, inconceivably interesting; it would be an unparalleled experience in the study of physical geography, but it would not yet be *landscape*. On a still nearer approach we should see the earth as from a balloon, and the land would seem to hollow itself beneath us like a great round dish, but the hills would be scarcely perceptible. We should still say, 'It is not landscape yet.' At length, after touching the solid earth, and looking round us, and seeing trees near us, fields spread out before, and blue hills far away, we should say, 'This, at last, is *landscape*. It is not the world as the angels may

see it from the midst of space, but as men see it who dwell in it, and cultivate it, and love it.'

There is a passage in Emerson where he ingeniously observes that although fields and farms belong to this man or that, the landscape is nobody's private property. Even on those vast estates in the Highlands of Scotland where all that the eye embraces—even to the distant mountains—may belong to a single owner, you have never the feeling that he possesses the landscape; and probably he has not that feeling himself, but looks upon the landscape as something distinct from acreage, and lordship, and rent. The land appertains to its lord, but the landscape belongs to him who, for the time being, enjoys it. As the aspect of nature is continually changing, it might even be maintained that what we call one landscape is, in fact, a succession of landscapes; and that those which we miss out of the endless series are lost to us irrecoverably, like the dead whom we have never known.

BULLS IN THE ROMAN CAMPAGNA

Painted by CAMILLE PARIS

Etched by *A. MASSÉ*

There are few pictures in which animals and landscape are so happily associated as here. The strength of the vigorous bulls, which would make them seem imprisoned in a green field, has ample range over the vast extent of the Campagna, and the very badness of the land (from a farmer's point of view) brings the animals nearer to a state of nature. The reader will observe the immense importance of the black bull, whose head and horns rise above the hills of the distance. Without the animals the landscape would be simply dreary; without the landscape the bulls would be mere studies of animal form. Together, they make an impressive picture of animal life in the most suitable natural surroundings.

CHAPTER II.

Illusions.

THE whole subject of landscape is a world of illusions, the only thing about it that is certainly not an illusion being the effect upon the mind of each particular human being who fancies that he sees something, and *knows* that he feels something, when he stands in the presence of nature. His feelings are a reality, but with regard to that which causes them it is hard to say how much is reality and how much a phantom of the mind.

Colour, like sound, is a sensation caused by vibrations, the most obvious difference being that the vibrations producing colour are in the thin ether and those conveying sound in heavier and denser media, as air, or water, or aqueous vapours. Where there is no eye there is no colour, and in the absence of an ear there cannot be what we call sound. With the decline of light colour changes, hues take different relative values, and in the absence of light they altogether cease to exist. The farmer fancies that a carrot retains its carroty hues in the dark, only that he is unable to see them for want of light; but in reality the carrot is colourless in the dark, and even in the light it has only the property of exciting in certain eyes, not in all, the chromatic sensations of red and yellow.

If we go a little farther in observing what the colour-sensations really amount to, we find that they vary to infinity with different human idiosyncrasies; whence we are driven to the inevitable conclusion that no human being has risen to any fixed standard of colour outside of himself. All that a man knows about it is, that in the presence of certain natural objects or effects he experiences certain sensations, and beyond this he cannot go.

What is called the cultivation of the colour faculty appears to be simply the artificial inducement of a higher degree of nervous susceptibility, by which those nerves that act in such a manner as to produce the sensation we call colour arrive at an artificial state, in which they can be set in motion by a more feeble stimulus. But the cultivation of a bundle of nerves does not prove that external nature is delicately coloured; it only proves that the cultivated nerves are capable of acting

in a certain way under a stimulus too slight to affect nerves in a natural condition. What the real nature of that stimulus is we cannot tell; we only know that it conveys the sensation of a coloured world: but this sensation is so far from being a reliable report of some positive reality that critics and painters who have been cultivating the colour-sense assiduously ever since they were boys arrive at the most contradictory conclusions, some of them affirming that certain pictures are charming and true to nature whilst others say that the very same pictures are vinegar to the eyes and set the teeth on edge. Nothing is more common in the mutual criticisms of artists than the accusation of a natural incapacity for seeing colour.

The evidence that we possess, in the Homeric poems and elsewhere, of a degree of colour-perception very inferior in delicacy to our own, points to the inevitable conclusion that we ourselves may be still very far from having attained the ultimate development of this faculty. In some future time the human race may reach such a high degree of sensitiveness that it may be aware of distinctions in sensation at present beyond our experience, and words may be invented for shades and varieties of hue that would have no meaning for us if we heard them with the fullest explanation. Our descriptions of natural colouring would be alike unintelligible to an ancient Greek and a Scottish Highlander, for both of whom, alike, anything rather dark was 'black.' It is only in modern times, in consequence of analytical habits which we have acquired from our interest in painting, that we have become able to distinguish between the nature of a hue and the intensity of light. The poverty of colour in Homer has become one of the commonplaces of criticism. In comparison with Scott, Homer is almost destitute of colour, but the evolution of the colour-sense did not by any means end with the author of *Waverley*. It is still progressing. Compare William Black in this respect with Sir Walter. In consequence of modern culture by means of painting (practically, or by the observation of what others do in painting and that interest in such doings which is a new characteristic of modern life) William Black has reached a power of feeling colour-sensations and describing them which is evidently a great advance on the comparatively insensitive work of his great predecessor. Not that Scott's colouring seems untrue to us, so far as it goes, but it was simple and elementary. Tennyson, again, is a much richer colourist than Wordsworth.

I shall have more to say upon this subject later. For the present it is enough to note that we must be continually exposed to illusions

about colour, both because we differ from our own contemporaries and because there is every reason to believe that our degree of nervous sensitiveness is not the highest to which the human race may be slowly advancing. Besides these reasons it is certain that we continually fall into the error of attributing to inanimate objects chromatic qualities that are merely sensations in ourselves, and there is absolutely no reason for supposing that if we reached the highest development of which our optical nerves may be capable we should, even then, be able to appreciate the full range of natural colouring, if there were such a thing as natural colouring at all.

Let us now examine something more positively ascertainable. If the reader will consult his own recollections of what he has seen in nature he will recognise the curious truth that very much of the impressiveness of natural scenery depends upon the degree in which *mass* appears to predominate over *detail.* An extremely detailed view of anything is rarely, if ever, impressive. In perfectly clear weather a mountain does not look nearly so grand as when its parts are detached by mist and its nearer details only partially revealed amidst broad spaces of shade. So it is with the other elements of landscape; they lose in impressiveness as the details become more visible. But the visibility of detail depends in a great measure upon the condition of our own eyesight. A man with very clear, penetrating vision, sees thousands of details that are quite invisible to another, whence the strange but inevitable conclusion that the possession of very good eyesight may be a hindrance to those feelings of sublimity that exalt the poetic imagination. We may go farther in the direction of this thought, and ask ourselves how much of the landscape is in nature and how much in ourselves, when a conceivable increase of visual power beyond that possessed by the most penetrating human eyes would reveal millions of other details in nature. Nay, we may even try the experiment by means of artificial aids to vision, and give ourselves, with the help of an optician, the eyes of an eagle, to the total destruction of that breadth of effect which is so much valued by artists, and which really does make nature better than if we saw more of it.

The degrees of darkness and light may seem to be more positive and ascertainable than the varieties of hue. They attracted attention earlier; they can be perceived by less educated organs and by a more primitive mind. But are we quite sure that we see light and dark in the same way? Are we sure that what each of us perceives in nature as obscurity is really obscure in itself? May there not be an illusion

here due to our own organs? A vessel is sailing near the shore in the deepening twilight, and a passenger, who has very good eyes, affirms that there is not light enough to see the rocks. Not light enough? There is plenty of light still, but there is not *eye* enough. The captain takes his night-glass to supply this deficiency, and it is as if the day had become younger by an hour. He sees the rocks plainly, and the cottages in the little fishing-village, and reads the sign over the inn-door. The nocturnal animals see sufficiently even when it is darker still. They bear witness to the existence of light in nature when man denies it. Even amongst human beings there are the widest differences in the power of adaptation to low degrees of light. The prudent old mother reproves her daughter for spoiling her eyes by reading in the twilight: 'My dear,' she says, 'I am sure you cannot possibly see, and will ruin your sight by straining and trying.' The daughter answers that she sees quite well. Which of the two is right as to the legibility of the book at that hour? Each is right for herself, but neither of them could tell us how much or how little illumination Nature had really afforded.

If colour and light are doubtful it may be presumed that we are on safe ground when we come to form, but even here it may easily be shown that idiosyncrasy plays its part, and that people do not see the same forms in the same objects. If ten different landscape-painters were set to draw the same mountain from the same place they would produce ten different forms. One of them would unintentionally exaggerate its ruggedness, another its height; one of them would be struck by a certain feature, and give it disproportionate prominence; another would scarcely notice it, and mark it only by a slight indication. An infinite variety of sentiments and preferences affect our estimate of the shapes of things. Custom has an enormous influence upon that estimate, as we see by fashion in dress, which makes us believe that the fashions of ten years ago were ludicrously out of shape. Even certain peculiarities of structure in the human body rise into fashion for a time and affect our estimates of the natural figure itself. It is at one time the fashion to be slim, and then a thin person has a good chance of being thought elegant. At another time plumpness is in fashion, and then the same person would look, not elegant, but meagre. Are we sure that with these varying estimates of the same form we really see the same form at different times? Do we not, rather, see different forms with the eyes of imagination?

The effect of experience upon our estimate of grandeur in the per-

manent features of landscape is enough to convince us how much of that grandeur must be in our own temporary way of looking at things, and in the preparation for seeing that we have undergone. Some hill in the north of England that impressed us forcibly with the ideas of size and sublimity in boyhood, seems tame and bare in mature life when we have learned from the Alps what Nature is in her magnificence. Even the very lines of the minor hill appear to have altered in the meanwhile. They are not so steep as they used to be, they rise with less audacity, the crags are no longer the awful precipices of our youth. We may retain feelings of affection towards the scenes that were connected with our earlier years, but they are accompanied by a feeling of disenchantment akin to that we reluctantly acknowledge when some human mind that once seemed to us almost august in its greatness is seen to shrink to very ordinary dimensions.

The mere effect of perspective is a powerful cause of illusion. Sometimes in the course of travel we have seen a romantic castle or a little mediaeval city with walls and towers perched far away in the hazy distance on its own rocky height. The temptation to go out of our settled itinerary and visit the castle or city is at times all but irresistible; but it is better not to yield, better to carry the beautiful and romantic vision away with us like a dream, or like a description in the pages of a poet, than to go close to it and see the far less inspiring reality. Sometimes we take a middle course, we resist the temptation and carry away the poetic impression; but we say, 'I must visit that land again and go to that wonderful castle.' During the years that intervene it is well; we have the glamour of the vision and a hope, but in an evil day we go to the place again and have leisure to see it near, and then it becomes impossible to conjure up the mysterious distance any more. A reality has taken its place—a reality of hard stone walls and a hundred architectural defects that obtrude themselves importunately on the memory.

It is with the perspective of landscape as with historical perspective. If the life of ancient Athens could be made accessible to us and visible in all its details as that of Paris is to-day, we should see the meanness and folly of small intellects where now we admire the majesty of great ones. The masterpieces of architecture in marble would not conceal from us the narrow and wretched tenements of the common people; the mobility of their political passions, the ferocity of their hatreds, the unreasonableness of their expectations, would all be as apparent to us as are the same faults in our Parisian neighbours; and the strong dis-

approval with which sinless London now looks upon sinful Paris might be in part diverted to the vices practised in the City of the Violet Crown.

Of all the illusions connected with landscape, there is not one so prevalent amongst sentimental persons as the transference of their own tender feelings to the natural world. The scenes that make them melancholy are spoken of and written about in prose and poetry as if they were melancholy in themselves, whilst those that awaken cheerful feelings are described as merry, and even 'laughing:'—

> 'There mildly dimpling, Ocean's cheek
> Reflects the tints of many a peak
> Caught by the *laughing tides* that lave
> Those Edens of the eastern wave.'

Islands and waters are compared to beauties who smile charmingly in their sleep:—

> 'Tis moonlight over Oman's sea,
> Her banks of pearl and palmy isles
> Bask in the night-beams beauteously,
> And her blue waters *sleep in smiles.*'

There is no limit to the number of these expressions in literature; not that poets and other imaginative writers really believe that inanimate nature either mourns or rejoices,—

> 'Not that, in sooth, o'er mortal urn
> Those things inanimate can mourn;'

but that men find it a heightening of human pleasure and a deepening of human sorrow to associate external nature with both, and that there really are in nature certain moods which seem to reflect the moods of the human mind, and may easily be confounded with them when there is an artistic reason for doing so. This anthropomorphism exists in great force in simple minds that have a strong affection for nature, or for their native country (when it *is* country and not some hideous over-populated town), and it is not always easy for more analytical minds to divest themselves of it. It is not a false sentiment in simple people, but it may be fostered till it becomes a false sentiment in the intellectual, and it is better for them to be rid of it. There is no valid reason for supposing any sympathy with human sorrow or any participation in human happiness amongst the objects that compose natural landscape, or the effects of light and gloom by which they are made to appear so

different at different times. There is, no doubt, a remarkably close analogy between the moods of changeful nature and the caprices of human passion, or between the steady brightness of a fine climate and the serenity of an equal temper joined to a clear intelligence, but there is nothing more than an analogy. There is not even any great educating power in the appearances of nature, for we do not find, on investigating the subject, that the populations of those countries where nature is most cheerful and most beautiful lead always cheerful or beautiful lives. They are often far more dull and far less capable of elevating themselves to moral and intellectual beauty than the inhabitants of less favoured lands. This contrast between man and nature has been felt by travellers in beautiful regions where 'all, save the spirit of man, is divine.' The opposite contrast, between steadiness in human character and an unreliability in climate that imperils every harvest may be seen in the northern parts of our own island.

When all illusions are brushed away the truth still remains that for some minds the natural world of landscape has a perpetual interest and charm, either as a reflection of their own moods or as a stimulus that induces them. Though philosophy may have done its worst, and conclusively proved that nature is destitute alike of melancholy and cheerful feelings, it is still true that for some of us an effect of light may be the suggestion of bright imaginings, and an effect of gloom the cause of a vague and tender melancholy or a gravity descending to depression. These consequences are indeed, and must ever remain, independent of the existence of sentiment in hills and clouds or of real anger in the unconscious waves of the sea. It is enough that in the presence of certain objects or effects of nature we feel certain influences on the mind. The writer of this volume is and has always been only too sensitive to these influences—*too* sensitive, because it is not desirable that inanimate nature should gain an excessive influence over us; but however great it may have been in his own case he has no remnant of a belief that inanimate nature is either kindly disposed towards him in fair weather or angry at him in foul. He has been in a storm at sea when a mast was carried away; he has seen a whirlwind strong enough to lift up stones; and he has been within a few yards of a tree when it was riven and killed by a thunderbolt: but these natural occurrences did not appear to indicate hostility to man. The explosions of the natural world are not dynamite outrages.

CHAPTER III.

Our Feelings of Affection for Nature.

AFTER what has been said on the subject of illusions, it may seem almost superfluous to occupy time in considering such a question as the reasonableness of our affection for nature. 'Evidently,' it may be said, 'such affectionate feelings towards that which cannot return affection must be one of those illusions to which the imaginative temperament is so frequently exposed.'

When, however, we observe closely the condition of mind which is accompanied by the affection for landscape, we discover that it is compatible with a very sceptical and illusion-destroying habit of investigation. A man may be perfectly convinced that rocks and trees have no affection for him, and still he may be affectionately attached to certain places. We give to some animals, especially to horses, a degree of affection far exceeding any that they are able to return, and there is even a pathetic interest for ourselves in being clearly aware that the lower nature knows not how thoughtfully it is cared for. With the single exception of the dog, all our pets amongst the lower animals are in this position relatively to ourselves. They appreciate our kindness a little, but have no conception of the extent of it. The old horse can never be aware that his master has put himself to inconvenience rather than impose upon him an effort beyond his strength. He does not know that his food costs more than he is able to earn. We do not expect any gratitude for these kindnesses, and we are capable of feeling attachment for animals even less capable of returning it than the horse. I remember feeling a sort of pathetic affection for a toad. I had found out a sort of whistling that he seemed to like and he would slowly move towards me in my garden, when he became a patient if not an intelligent auditor. He was not beautiful, yet I looked upon him with a friendly feeling as an humble fellow-creature situated physically and intellectually at some distance below the human level, but not absolutely without sympathy for what is musical in humanity. My poor, hideous little friend got crushed by accident, and I mourned for him. The garden-seat where I had sat and whistled for him was no longer quite the same for me. Others have established intimacies with mice and spiders, and we con-

stantly see lovers of plants who take almost as much interest in their health and welfare as if they were children. We acquire such a fondness for old trees that we are hurt and offended if the landowner cuts them down. Nobody supposes that there can be any reciprocity here. There is no illusion, as there may be with regard to animals. From the tree to the ground it grows upon, the transition is not difficult, so we love anything in nature that has some distinguishing feature of its own. It would be impossible, I suppose, to love one square mile in the middle of the Atlantic better than the square mile next to it; and it might be difficult to have any particular affection for a spot in the midst of the desert; but the two deserts of land and water have inspired the most passionate, the most enthusiastic attachments. Here the affections attach themselves, not to a small place, but to great, dominant characteristics such as the sublimity of boundlessness, the absence of restriction. In narrower and more confined scenery the smaller the features the better chance they have of fixing themselves permanently in our hearts. A little stream like the Duddon, a little lake like Grasmere or Rydal Water, wins the affections of a poet more surely than the Mississippi or Lake Superior. It is observed, in the same way, that London rarely inspires that intense sentiment of local patriotism which has been the pride of inferior cities.

To understand with accuracy the nature of our affection for places we have to distinguish between that affection which is due to association with *persons* whom we have loved, with the recollections of childhood and youth, and that other affection for places which exists entirely by itself. The very existence of the latter may be doubted. It may be affirmed that in all cases our love of nature is closely connected with our love for human beings, and that we never really attach ourselves to scenes that do not remind us of people who have been dear to us. No one denies the immense power of such associations. They have often been employed by the poets, and never more beautifully than by Tennyson when he heard again, after a long interval, the sound of a waterfall at Cauteretz and he thought of the dead friend who had heard it with him long ago:—

'All along the valley while I walked to-day,
The two-and-thirty years were a mist that rolls away;
For all along the valley, down thy rocky bed,
Thy living voice to me was as the voice of the dead;
And all along the valley, by rock and cave and tree
The voice of the dead was a living voice to me.'

In this case a certain affection for the waterfall would be a natural sentiment—

'Thy living voice to me was as the voice of the dead.'

One might love a waterfall for less than that, but what is to be said of those cases of sudden attachment to landscapes, or objects in landscape, that we see for the first time? It has probably happened to the reader, as it has happened to me, to fall in love with spots that had absolutely no association with his previous existence. We travel half listlessly, wearied by the repetition of many scenes that we have not the slightest desire to revisit, when all at once we come upon some spot from which it is difficult to tear ourselves away, and the longer we remain there the greater the difficulty of leaving. My first and most durable attachment of that kind was for Loch Awe, and to this day my passion is not easily explicable. It was hardly suggested by literature, for Scott would have sent me rather to Loch Katrine, Wordsworth to the English lakes, Byron to Geneva. It can scarcely have been suggested by art, for I had seen few pictures of the lake except the usual studies of Kilchurn; and it was entirely disengaged from personal associations, as none of my friends at that time had ever lived in Argyllshire. As for historical associations, which often give us a first inducement to interest ourselves in a place, the few legends about Highland chiefs and clansmen that are connected with Loch Awe are far inferior in authenticity and interest to the history of Craven. However it so happened that I loved Loch Awe, and do still, most unreasonably. 'Tis an unrequited affection! The peat-stained waters of that gloomy pool would drown me with the most complete indifference. I have not even the consolation of Voltaire who could be proud of his lake and say 'Mon lac est le premier!' My lake is not the first, nor is it even the most beautiful. Lucerne is incomparably grander, Leman far more spacious and cerulean, but they are nothing to me in comparison with the waters that surround Fraoch Elan, and Ardhonnel, and Inishail!

The affection for landscape may be confounded with the patriotic sentiment that afflicts us with nostalgia when we are away from our own home. That sentiment includes, no doubt, strong feelings of attachment to local features of landscape, but it is distinct from the true landscape passion which, as we have just seen, may be independent of personal associations. The two may be independent, or they may exist together, and the double power of them may be brought to bear upon a single scene. Scott had a very strong affection for landscape, especially when associated

with romantic histories and ruins; and we have it on his own evidence that he had this sentiment in connexion with places outside the range of his local affections. 'The romantic feelings,' he said, 'which I have described as predominating in my mind gradually rested upon and associated themselves with the grand features of the landscape around me; and the historical incidents or traditional legends connected with many of them gave to my admiration a sort of intense impression of reverence, which at times made my heart feel too big for its bosom. From this time the love of natural beauty, more especially when combined with ancient ruins, or remains of our fathers' piety or splendour, became with me an insatiable passion, which I would willingly have gratified by travelling over half the globe.' In these last words we have clear evidence that Scott's passion for romantic landscape was not confined to his own country; but he had, in addition to it, a powerful local passion also; and when the two were focussed together on one object, their combined intensity produced a fire of enthusiasm whereof cooler and more indifferent natures cannot have any adequate conception. The country around Abbotsford usually disappoints the ordinary tourist, who rather wonders that Scott should have selected it. The tourist does not think much of the Tweed, nor of the Eildon Hills, but Scott loved them doubly, both as landscape with romantic associations, and as the scenery around his home. Who does not remember that pathetic return from Italy when Scott came home to die, and especially that awakening from a state of apparent insensibility in his carriage? 'As we descended the vale of Gala he began to gaze about him, and by degrees it was obvious that he was recognising the features of that familiar landscape. Presently he murmured a name or two—*Gala Water, surely, Buckholm, Torwoodlee.* As we rounded the hill, and the outline of the Eildons burst on him, he became greatly excited; and when, turning himself on the couch, his eye caught at length his own towers, at the distance of a mile, he sprang up with a cry of delight.' Nor was his affection for places that of the eye only. Sounds were sweet to his ear if connected with what he loved in nature; and the sweetest of them all was 'the gentle ripple of the Tweed over its pebbles,' distinctly audible through the open window of that chamber at Abbotsford on the sunny day of September when Sir Walter breathed his last.

Endless quotations might be collected from the poets in evidence of their affection for streams and hills, and for particular valleys, often of small account in the physical geography of the world. Men of colder nature may believe that these poetical professions are not more than half sincere—a trick of the poet's craft—but the truth seems rather to be that affection

can scarcely allow itself public expression in prose, whilst, on the contrary, it is quite free to utter itself with the most passionate force in poetry, so that a poet may describe his feelings adequately, when a prose-writer would either avoid alluding to them, or else pass them over with slight and inadequate mention. In prose we have something of the reserve about matters of feeling that regulates the expression of them in conversation, or if we express our feelings in all their strength we are compelled to do so through fictitious characters. There is a certain modesty that prevents a prose-writer from laying his heart open to the public gaze. In poetry the case is different. There the use of metre and the assumption of poetic style are held to be in themselves a sufficient disguise, so that the private man utters his feelings behind that mask with a frankness that would be impossible without it. It is only necessary to mention *Childe Harold* and *In Memoriam* as conspicuous examples of this absence of reticence in verse. I should say, then, that instead of being clever actors, who assume feelings for the occasion, the poets who have expressed a great love for nature were men who spoke truly and from the heart, by the privilege of their order, what others have often felt but dared not venture to express; and the proof that this must be the true view of the case is that this poetic affectionateness finds an echo amongst a multitude of readers. The permanent popularity of the familiar ode of Horace, *Ad Fontem Bandusiae*, is due to the affection for a natural scene which is expressed in it, and which has excited such tender sympathy in later times with reference to other fountains and rivulets that the proud, affectionate prophecy was not made in vain :—

'Fies nobilium tu quoque fontium,
Me dicente cavis impositam ilicem
Saxis; unde loquaces
Lymphae desiliunt tuae.'

In our own times the poet who for the finish of his workmanship may best be compared with Horace (whilst he excels him in imaginative power) has said his farewell to a 'cold rivulet' in verses that may be read as long as it shall flow :—

'But here will sigh thine alder tree,
And here thine aspen shiver;
And here by thee will hum the bee,
For ever and for ever.

'A thousand suns will stream on thee,
A thousand moons will quiver;
But not by thee my steps shall be,
For ever and for ever.'

But however truly Tennyson may have loved this nameless rivulet, or Burns the Nith and the Doon, or Wordsworth the Duddon, there can be no affection amongst the poets so heroic in its constancy as that of a hard-working landscape-painter. The poets feel, no doubt, deeply and sincerely, but their passion expresses itself with little effort—a few laconic verses here and there in Virgil, an ode or two of Horace, an occasional stanza by Burns. The landscape-painter works for months and years to express the strength and intensity of *his* affection, and often forgets that Nature cares less for him than he for her, gathering seeds of death in long sittings by river and mere. There was a French landscape-painter in our time, Chintreuil, who was not a great artist (as his gifts were not of a very high order, though his admirers have made a place for him), but in simple affection for nature he has had few equals. There is a little river called the Bièvre that flows towards Paris, and Chintreuil loved it so that he would go and sit by it at dawn, when the grass was wet with dew, and stay there till the late twilight, insufficiently clad, and unconscious of his danger, passing through a hundred changes of temperature. At length he was taken ill with pleurisy, and never had any real health afterwards. Hundreds of obscure workers run the same risk every year, loving their nooks and corners of the great globe, and leaving comfort to bake themselves in the noonday sun, or be chilled by the evening dew. Their toils increase their affection. The more they work on a spot the more beauty they perceive in it, and every little place that they have painted becomes in a manner their own, like a field that some hardy emigrant has fenced off for himself in the wilderness.

It is very difficult to give any satisfactory reason for these strong attachments to certain scenes—attachments strong enough in some cases to affect men even to tears. After trying to get to the bottom of the matter if possible, I have arrived at the following theory, which is not a complete explanation.

Each of us is constituted with a special idiosyncrasy related in some mysterious way to a certain class of natural scenery; and when we find ourselves in a scene answering to our idiosyncrasy, the mind feels itself at home there and rapidly attaches itself by affection. We may go a step farther, and ascertain how certain tendencies in the mind lead us to certain preferences. There is, for example, on one side the love of liberty and on the other the desire for shelter and protection. The love of liberty would lead us to enjoy great spaces; the desire for shelter would cause us to seek rather for enclosures, and for

large natural objects that cast shadows. The lovers of liberty feel a delight in the vast horizons of the ocean and the desert. Give us a ship and we will merrily sail—

> 'O'er the glad waters of the dark blue sea,
> Our thoughts as boundless and our souls as free.'

There, at last, we shall have done with these walls and hedges that hem us in on every side! It is something to be sure that we have space enough.

> 'We know the merry world is round,
> And we may sail for evermore.'

To other minds the idea of unlimited space is oppressive. They would prefer something like the Happy Valley of *Rasselas*, separated from the vast outer world by a defence of mountains, and containing within itself all that is necessary to a peaceful and protected existence. Here, then, we have a difference of feeling at the outset that must lead to a wide difference of choice, but in the love of limited scenery there may be many varieties. The lover of sublimity would desire a valley or a plain surrounded by mountains of noble form and magnificent elevation; the lover of tranquillity would prefer more modest hills rising without ruggedness, and covered either with green pastures or rich woods. The lover of size would like his horizon, though limited, to be vast like the lake-ward prospect from Lausanne; but the lover of snugness would prefer a well-sheltered corner in some beautiful Derbyshire valley. There are people without any strong passion for the sublime, who have a natural preference for confined and unexciting scenery on a small scale; and there are others who are so constituted that the melancholy, bleak, and inhospitable aspects of wild scenery seem to answer to some need in their own minds. These general tastes and tendencies must in a great measure determine at least the direction in which we go to seek the landscape of our ideal affection. The differences of taste are endless. How often are we surprised by them when some rich man has the most perfect liberty of choice, and goes to spend months of every year in a place that seems to us unattractive! This surprise is continually excited by the way in which landscape-painters fall in love with strange little out-of-the-way places that nobody but painters would examine.

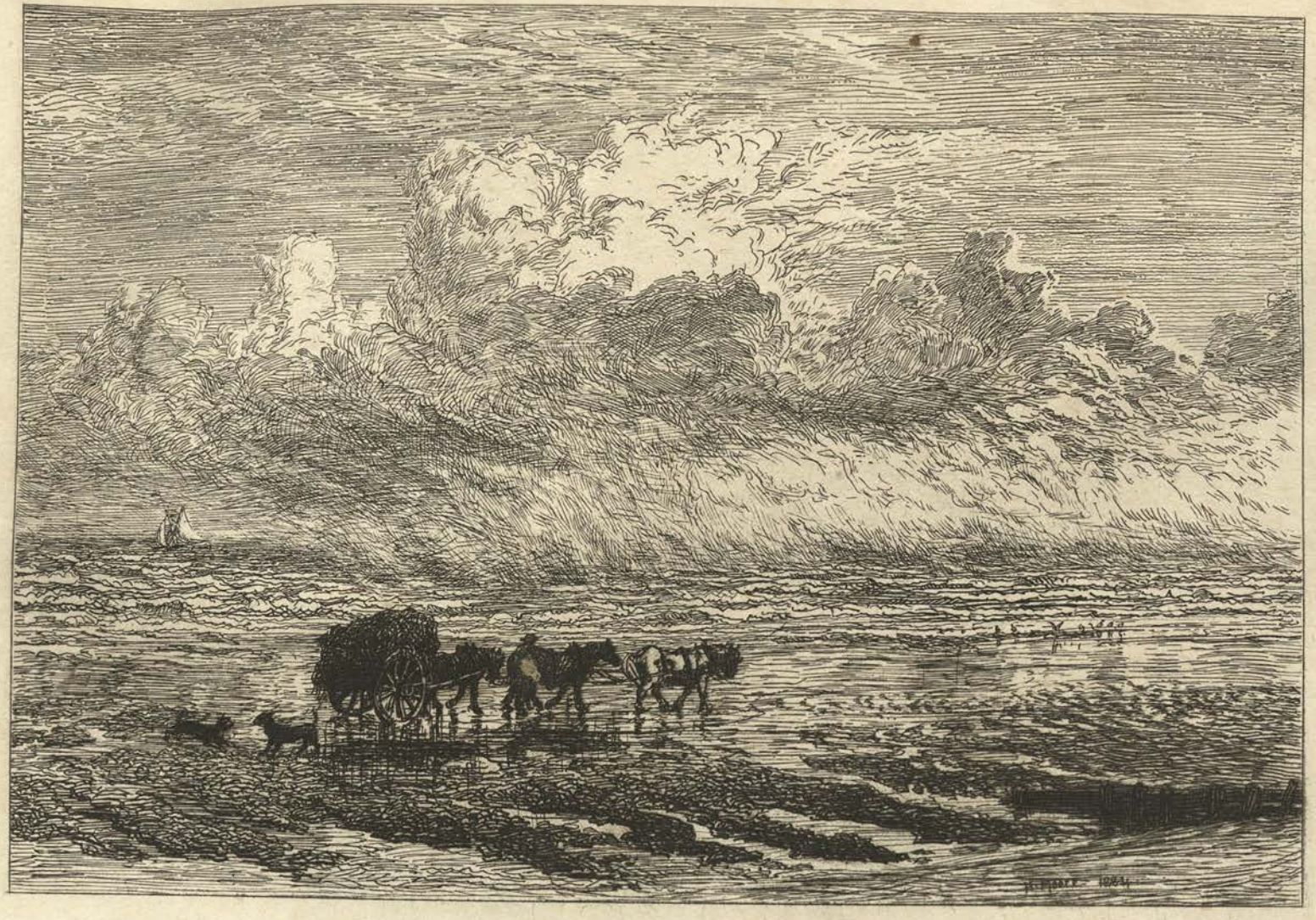
In that kind of travel—the only rational kind—which permits the wanderer to pause and look about him, we come upon certain places that belong to us by a mysterious natural kinship. It is almost as if

THE BEACHED MARGENT OF THE SEA

Drawn by HENRY MOORE

Reproduced in Photogravure by *DUJARDIN*

The plate is particularly interesting to me in two ways. First, as to the drawing, I was curious to know how far, with mere pen-lines, the artist would be able to suggest the gleaming and rather mysterious effect on cloud, water, and sea-beach, that had been the real subject of his picture; and then, as the purpose of the reproduction was to approach the quality of an original etching, the possibility of attaining that quality was a matter of great technical interest to me. The result is satisfactory in both respects. Mr. Moore's drawing completely suggests to the mind the effect he was thinking of (though the method of work may seem light and loose in comparison with much less intelligent handling), and the photogravure is so like an original needle-etching that it would unquestionably pass for one if the process were not explained.



one could be cousin to a place. After the first introduction the intimacy is soon formed, and the spot will be remembered for ever. Now, however deeply and inextricably we may be plunged in illusions, however we may be surrounded by them on every side, I hold that there can be no illusion about the affinities that we feel. If we are conscious of a certain suitableness, whether in persons or places, the suitableness must be a real relation whether we are able to account for it or not; and if there is incompatibility, and our natural instincts warn us of its existence, it is assuredly useless to strive against it, however unreasonable it may seem.

I hold it to be one of the greatest elements in happiness to live, as Wordsworth did, in the midst of scenes that are exactly adapted to our needs; or at least, if that cannot be, to live within a traversable distance from them. Amongst the minor misfortunes for which nobody is much pitied, and which are far heavier than they seem to others, may be included that common one of being compelled to remain (generally for reasons of poverty or occupation) in a country that we naturally dislike. The influence of landscape upon happiness is far greater than is generally believed. There is a nostalgia which is not exactly a longing for one's birthplace, but a weary dissatisfaction with the nature that lies around us, and a hopeless desire for the nature that we were born to enjoy.

CHAPTER IV.

The Effects of Our Physical Condition on the Love of Nature.

AN association of ideas, over which we have little control, establishes itself between our own physical condition and the external world, affecting an appreciation of natural sublimity and beauty, whilst it mingles, more or less unconsciously, with all our recollections of nature.

I have a friend who has the instincts of a traveller in an extraordinary degree, and he tells me that the ideal state for him would be that of a pure intelligence disengaged from physical conditions like a ghost, and able to transport itself at will to any sublime or beautiful scene in nature. Such a being would not have to think about luncheon and dinner; he would not have to make compromises with human weakness; but might visit with equal independence both 'Greenland's icy mountains' and 'India's coral strand.'

The idea is tempting, and my friend has the satisfaction of believing that it will be realised in a future state. His travelling instincts are so predominant, that his idea of heaven is simply the liberty to visit suns and planets as a disembodied spirit. We were looking at the stars together on a clear evening, when he affirmed positively that he would explore them all in the course of that happy eternity of cosmic travelling which was to succeed to his imprisonment on earth.

To descend once more to our present condition, I should say that the natural landscape is a bundle of relations, not only to our minds, but to our bodies also.

Our notion of the grandeur of a mountain is closely connected with the fatigue and difficulty of the ascent. The awfulness of a space of desert is due to our knowledge that if travellers succumb to fatigue or thirst whilst crossing it they must meet their doom; there is nothing for them but death on the burning sands. The sublimity of great spaces on the planet has been sensibly diminished by our increased mechanical facilities for crossing them. The Atlantic is hardly sublime to passengers in a floating hotel that crosses it in a week, but it regains all its old terror and sublimity for a shipwrecked crew in a boat. Yet the ocean itself is the same in both cases, the difference being between man helped

by the superhuman strength of steam and man left to his own resources.

If we borrow for a moment the imagination of Rabelais, and suppose the existence of a giant a thousand feet high, it is evident that the Lake of Geneva would be to him nothing more than a beautiful swimming-bath, in most parts rather inconveniently shallow, and seldom deep enough to put him in any danger of drowning. The idea of the enormous depth of the clear water, which is to our minds one of the greatest elements of sublimity connected with the lake, would for him be simply an idea of convenience quite destitute of sublimity.

There is no physical power, denied to us by nature, which we desire so much as that of flight, but the immediate effect of such a power if it were bestowed upon us would be to annihilate the sublimity of all mountains. With an eagle's power of flight we should ascend Mont Blanc in ten minutes, and as we should be in no danger of falling down crevasses or over precipices such things would hardly attract our attention. If the power of flight were gained by the human race in some future time, the feelings of awe with which we still regard a lofty mountain would become almost unintelligible to our posterity.

From these imaginary differences, let us now descend to those which really exist. Man is not a very strong animal, but there is an immense difference between a strong man and a weak one, so that it is not possible for the two to think about nature in the same way. Each inevitably makes, more or less, unconscious reference to his own feelings of pleasure or fatigue. The strong and hardy man thinks of wild and desolate scenery as a capital region for sport, the weak man inevitably associates with it the idea of dreaded over-exertion. The first is exhilarated, the other depressed, by the same scenery.

The notion of the Highlands of Scotland entertained by strong, young Englishmen is that of a huge playground. What can be more delightful than a walk, with gun and dog, and a flask of whisky in one's pocket, over picturesque miles of moor, in the keen mountain air? What rest is comparable to that of the strong man who has tired himself without exhaustion? He dines heartily in his shooting-lodge at night, and then smokes and rests deliciously till bedtime. Meanwhile, perhaps, there is some weak old Highland woman who has attempted to cross the moor from one wretched tenement in a desolate glen to another wretched tenement in another desolate glen, but the distance has proved too much for her; and whilst the strong man is talking over the details of his sport, she, poor soul! has given up an effort beyond her strength,

and, with a head whirling with giddiness, has lain down on the bleak moorland to die.* What a very different impression those two human beings must receive from the same stretch of Highland heath!

The two desires for character in landscape most closely associated with physical conditions are the desire for wild grandeur, associated with hardihood, or at least with energy, and the desire for softness and amenity associated either with indolence or weakness. It is curious that amongst the classical landscape-painters the two who were most famous and most often referred to in literature should have represented these two great divisions of the physical feelings with extreme distinctness. Salvator Rosa for our grandfathers represented the energetic side of the love of landscape, and Claude the peaceful side. Salvator had the tendencies of a powerful physical nature; Claude had the tastes of a gentler and probably weaker nature softened still farther by civilisation. The indolence of Horace, the sweet amenity of Virgil, made them in literature the remote ancestors of Claude.

It has often suited the designs of poets and novelists to associate the physical strength and energy of barbarous men with the rude sublimities of nature, whilst they as frequently contrive to give delicate and amiable heroines a background of pleasing landscape, often cultivated, and watered by streams that are just strong enough to supply the needs of ladies, and birds, and flowers. When the contrary association is made it is for the sake of contrast. Then the more delicate nature is brought into rude surroundings where the features of the landscape are hard, unsympathetic, and almost cruel, like the fastness of some robber-chief.

In landscape-painting it has been the common custom to put the figures of athletic soldiers or brigands in rocky defiles whilst luxuriously dressed ladies and gentlemen are made to walk on softly undulating lawns under the shade of umbrageous trees. A skilful French painter of this century, Compte Calix, invented a sort of earthly paradise in which graceful idlers of both sexes lounged through the hours of sunshine in delightful gardens and groves.

The same man may have known in his own person the two kinds of desire in landscape. He may have desired sublime landscape in his strength and a softer landscape when age or illness had taken his strength away. This is one of the advantages that may be derived from a varied experience in health. If we were always athletic we should imperfectly understand the merits of low hills, green fields, and restful waters. I think we never appreciate these quiet gifts of nature

* This description is not imaginary.

VISTA SEEN BETWEEN COLUMNS

Drawing by CLAUDE LORRAIN

Reproduced in Photogravure by *A. DAWSON*

As the reader perceives, this is an exceedingly slight and rapid drawing, executed with a few very simple lines and washes, in which there is not much variety or study of tone; but it is interesting as an example of Claude's laconic sketch memoranda, and especially because it is plain from this drawing that, like Van Eyck, he appreciated the effect of a landscape distance seen between columns of severe architecture. Such an architectural surrounding forms a frame for the natural landscape, which gains by it almost as decidedly as a painting gains by framing.

until we have enjoyed them during recovery from some exhausting illness. At such times we do not desire tempests and Alpine peaks, but it is delicious to sit on a garden-seat and look across summer meadows. If there are to be mountains at all in such a scene, they ought to be far away, that their cold snows and pitiless precipices may be like a dream of an unreal world.*

The contrast between what may be called the strong man's landscape and the weak man's landscape has never been more marked than in the difference between the authors of *Manfred* and *The Task*. Byron, the strong man, half sailor, half soldier, a pugilist, a marksman, and the best swimmer of his time, delighted in every manifestation of strength in nature. He 'made him friends of mountains,' he rejoiced in the power of winds and waters. From early youth the love of wild scenery had implanted itself in his mind, and his boyish verses, however poor in comparison with the riper fruits of his genius, expressed in the clearest terms not only the delight in grandeur but an impatience of tameness :—

'England! thy beauties *are tame and domestic*
To one who has roamed o'er the mountains afar:
Oh, for the crags that are wild and majestic!
The steep frowning glories of dark Loch na Garr!'

The passion for sublime scenery that took possession of Byron in early boyhood remained with him to the last, and he always traced the origin of it to boyish rambles in the land of his maternal ancestors :—

'He who first met the Highlands' swelling blue
Will love each peak that shows a kindred hue,
Hail in each crag a friend's familiar face,
And clasp the mountain in his mind's embrace.
Long have I roamed through lands which are not mine,
Adored the Alp, and loved the Apennine,
Revered Parnassus, and beheld the steep
Jove's Ida and Olympus crown the deep:
But 'twas not all long ages' lore, nor all
Their nature held me in their thrilling thrall;
The infant rapture still survived the boy,
And Loch na Garr with Ida looked o'er Troy,
Mixed Celtic memories with the Phrygian mount,
And Highland linns with Castalie's clear fount.'

* I have seen it stated lately that George Eliot was afraid of mountain scenery, and we know that she was fond of the English Midlands. Her health was not robust, and her mental work often exhausted her; she would therefore probably lack the physical power which is necessary to the full enjoyment of mountains.

Not only did Byron love mountains as the expression of the energy of the earth, but he had the same sympathy with every other expression of energy in nature. I need not quote the well-known passage about the ocean at the close of *Childe Harold*, but in an earlier stanza there is a brief expression which includes far more of nature, and perfectly shows the effect of the natural forces on a heart vigorous enough to respond to the mighty pulses of the universe :—

> 'Ye Elements!—*in whose ennobling stir*
> *I feel myself exalted.*'

From this to the physically feeble Cowper the transition is great indeed. The very scenery that Byron disliked as 'tame and domestic' is what Cowper describes with mildly observant affection. One does not doubt his sincerity. He spoke truly in the lines :—

> 'Thou know'st my praise of nature most sincere,
> And that my raptures are not conjured up
> To serve occasions of poetic pomp
> But genuine.'

The raptures are genuine enough, no doubt, but not very exciting. The poet describes the Ouse 'slow winding through a level plain of spacious meads, with cattle sprinkled o'er.' He feels

> 'The grace
> Of hedge-row beauties numberless, square tower,
> Tall spire, from which the sound of cheerful bells
> Just undulates upon the listening ear,
> Groves, heaths, and smoking villages, remote.'

Finally, he argues that these quiet scenes must be beautiful because they please him every day :—

> 'Scenes must be beautiful which, daily viewed
> Please daily, and whose novelty survives
> Long knowledge and the scrutiny of years:
> Praise justly due to those that I describe.'

The inspiration, we perceive, has been of a nature so little exalting that it does not save the poet from falling into plain prose in the concluding verse. In *The Garden* the opening lines reveal the author's taste for a smooth and civilised tranquillity, his dislike to adventure. He compares himself to a horseman who, after wandering 'in thickets and in brakes,' feels his spirits rise when he discovers

> 'A greensward smooth,
> And winds his way with pleasure and with ease.'

CHISELHURST COMMON

Original Etching by E. P. BRANDARD

Mr. Brandard's great skill and experience as an engraver make etching comparatively easy for him so far as technical matters are concerned. The reader will observe the importance (not very common in etchings) here given to the sky. The opposition of dark trees against light sky, and light trees against dark sky, is not new, but it is skilfully employed. The subject is pleasantly illustrative of the quiet kind of English scenery that the poet Cowper loved.

After an allusion to the indulgence of a satiric tendency, comes the exact expression of his physical tastes, that are made typical of intellectual prudence. Observe how precisely they are the tastes of a weak man, how the same weakness that makes him appreciate the sofa leads him to gentle and sequestered scenes in nature :—

> 'Twere wiser far
> For me, enamoured of sequestered scenes
> And charmed with rural beauty, to repose,
> Where chance may throw me, beneath elm or vine,
> My languid limbs, when summer sears the plains ;
> Or, when rough winter rages, on the soft
> And sheltered Sofa, while the nitrous air
> Feeds a blue flame, and makes a cheerful hearth.'

CHAPTER V.

The Power of Nature over Us.

IN one of Lacordaire's bursts of eloquence he exclaimed, '*J'ai dit adieu à l'océan, aux fleuves, et aux montagnes.*'

The passage has produced a widely different effect on different hearers or readers. To some it appears a melancholy abandonment of the world, to others it may take the more culpable aspect of a wilful closing of the mind against Divine influences acting upon us through God's creation, and it is likely in all cases to shock or sadden the hearer just at first. We can imagine the adieu to nature from the lips of a dying man on the eve of the inevitable separation from everything terrestrial; but it is more difficult to realise without pain the idea of a bright and vigorous intellect deliberately turning away from the perennial freshness of the natural world, and entering some gloomy prison-house from which the beauty of all things was to be excluded.

Lacordaire's own idea was not that of imprisonment, but emancipation. After the release from the influences of material beauty, he was to be freer for the pursuit of that moral beauty which he regarded as by far the more excellent of the two. His renunciation of nature was at the same time an asceticism and an escape. We may have no personal sympathy with either of these impulses. We may feel no desire to bid adieu to sea, rivers, or mountains, and yet understand Lacordaire's sentiment without sharing it. The natural universe has a certain influence over us which may become a predominant power, and it is intelligible that some minds may find this power an interference with what seem to them higher or more important avocations.

A landscape-painter is a person over whose existence the power of natural beauty is so strong that he is enslaved by it, often in opposition to manifest worldly interests. A young man who renounces a lucrative business for poverty and landscape-painting is the victim of natural beauty, and even in this pursuit there are degrees in the completeness of slavery. Those for whom Art is first and Nature only a mine of materials, are much less the slaves of Nature than those others who are fascinated by her perfection till they pass toilsome years in the simple

copyism of matter. Imagination half emancipates the artist, admiration without imagination enslaves him.

Many readers will remember with what rebellious energy Blake made his declaration of independence. He *would not* be enslaved by the natural world. He did not bid adieu to it like Lacordaire; but looked at it, and through it to something else which was the mirror of his mental existence. Blake reproached Wordsworth with almost deifying nature; and thought he was often in his works an atheist with regard to the true God.* According to Blake, atheism consisted in worshipping the natural world; 'which same natural world, properly speaking, is nothing real, but a mere illusion produced by Satan.' 'Everything,' he said, 'is atheism which assumes the reality of the natural and unspiritual world.' It may readily be supposed how cordially Blake would have approved the determination of Lacordaire to turn his back on the scenes of earth and his face towards a religious ideal. Even from the artistic point of view Blake hated and avoided nature. 'Natural objects,' he said, 'always did, and now do, weaken, deaden, and obliterate imagination in me. Wordsworth must know that what he writes valuable is not to be found in nature.'

The antagonism between the natural world and certain orders of minds in search of an ideal has been very completely stated by Victor de Laprade in his interesting volume on *Le Sentiment de la Nature avant le Christianisme.* His views are not always mine, but he has met the difficulties of the problem in his own way, and has clearly seen the antagonism that separates many good and able men from that nature which seemed to Wordsworth so desirable a friend for man.

Victor de Laprade did not disapprove of the early feeling about nature which first took possession of the awakening human mind. That feeling seemed to him both poetical and pious. The astonishment of the infantine man in the presence of natural phenomena 'became upon his lips poetry and in his heart a religion.' On the contrary, in its modern development, the interest in nature has turned to a multitude of details by which he enslaves his soul:

'Petty and unnecessary branches of industry, artificial wants, little notions without philosophy, arts without an ideal, establish more and more over the human heart the dominion of all that is not man and of all that is not God; the empire, in a word, of matter.

'The external world under all the names which it bears, that of nature,

* These sayings of Blake are quoted from *Crabbe Robinson's Diary*, Chapters xxix, xxx, xxxi.

of matter, or of flesh, is not impure and corrupting in itself, it only becomes so by its revolt against the spirit, by the ascendancy that man permits it over his own liberty. That which vitiates art, science, and even modern politics, is the triumphant revolt of the exterior and material element against the moral principle.'

Elsewhere M. de Laprade stated in its full force the objection to the study of the natural world which has been felt by many of his religion :

'If nature is corrupt, if the flesh and the external world are an opportunity and a cause of sin for man, the human intelligence cannot apply itself to the study of the natural sciences without incurring serious risks. It is to be feared that nature may hide God from us instead of revealing Him. Since the Fall the veil of creation has become thicker, the universe is no longer transparent, and God no longer shows Himself therein. The Almighty Father has taken His presence farther away from us. God is in a sense withdrawn from nature. Without the soul and God nature is a corpse. Science has applied herself to work upon the universe as upon a dead body.'

This is the kind of objection which is felt to the power of the natural world, and the reasons for it are still more apparent than they were at the date of M. de Laprade's book.* There can be no doubt that the power of the inanimate universe over man has prodigiously increased of late years on account of his increasing interest in it. He believes that he is becoming the master of Nature, but Nature is becoming mistress of him. He is like the driver of a railway-engine, who looks as if he were lord of the power of Steam, yet the Steam is so completely his master that he has to be constantly thinking about it and devoting his labour to its service. So it is with our love of landscape. Wordsworth's intellectual liberty was in great part sacrificed to his interest in the English Lake district. Constable devoted his mind to the scenery about Flatford, and as the whole intellect of a superior man may spend itself in grappling with any one of the great problems that nature presents to us, there is no reason why the whole of a life should not be spent, as Etty's was, in the struggle to paint flesh-colour. These men, and others like them, may have been happy in their chosen studies, but they were absorbed by them and sacrificed to them, slaves of that external world from which Lacordaire desired to be emancipated, and which St. Bernard passed through with indifference.

The sacrifice of scientific men to nature is beyond my province in this volume, but I may so far digress as to make the observation that it is even more complete than the sacrifice of artists. That which

* The second edition was published in 1866.

saves an artist is the ideal element in his mental action which gives him some independence of the actual world. The less he has of this ideal element the more nearly he approaches to the purely scientific character, and he may even completely attain it and be a simple student, dissector, and copyist of matter. Then he becomes closely related to our physiologists, who are as much sacrificed on the altar of natural science in one way as the miserable victim of vivisection, nailed to the dissecting-table, is in another. It seems as if man, after living and moving with an apparent and illusory freedom in the world of nature, were now rapidly becoming the student and slave of matter, and aware of his own servitude to that which once allured him by false promises of mastery.

All this looks discouraging, but there is something to be said in mitigation. Man has never been really free, and would not be happy if he were. He devotes himself to something outside of himself, and has not yet discovered any subject of study comparable in extent and interest to the world of nature. The farther he goes in natural studies the more the interest increases, nor is there any apparent reason to believe that it can ever, even in the remotest future, be exhausted.

If Nature gains a great power over us we may be the better for having submitted our intellects to the action of that mysterious power. I need not go into the religious question farther than one point, on which we are all agreed, that there is order in the natural universe, and that this order is due to the presence of a mysterious energy that is always working throughout nature with an absolutely unfailing regularity. This has been stated by Herbert Spencer in terms from which nobody dissents :—

'Amid the mysteries which become the more mysterious the more they are thought about, there will remain the one absolute certainty, that he (Man) is ever in presence of an Infinite and Eternal Energy, from which all things proceed.'

It cannot be a superstition to regard landscape as one of the expressions of that Energy. Even when everything that can possibly be thought superstitious has been surrendered, enough remains to give landscape the eternal interest which must belong to every manifestation of the omnipresent Power. Lacordaire himself, after bidding adieu to ocean, rivers, and mountains, would have admitted that they were so much, but he would have gone on to say that they were a lower manifestation than the lives of the saints, and that he dreaded their power as interfering with the action of a higher Power upon him.

It would be a vain waste of time to enter into any controversy about experiences so personal as these. The only rational way of treating them is to admit that Lacordaire's renunciation was right for *him* if he felt his soul the better for it, but at the same time to remain loyal to our own intuitions.

For me landscape is a perpetual interest and refreshment, and to renounce its benefits would be an unnecessary asceticism. Even if a pleasure were simply innocent that would be a sufficient reason for not rejecting it when such rejection diminished the charm of existence and involved some degree of ingratitude. Still more would it be an error to deny oneself a pleasure like this which has more than the negative recommendation of being harmless. The love of landscape includes what is grand and terrible as well as what is beautiful and alluring in nature. It is often an incomparable tonic, giving the strongest interest to energetic travel and a healthy stimulus that puts an end both to physical and mental indolence. Without it a man of easy fortune and studious habits like De Saussure might have lounged life away in his library; with it he led an existence as favourable to bodily health as that of a chamois-hunter, with an infinitely finer mental stimulus. The extremely healthy nature of Alexander Humboldt found in the active study of landscape (in his own way and from his own point of view) an outlet for his physical and mental vigour. If you compare the lives of Wordsworth and Alfred de Musset you cannot but perceive what a close connexion there was between the superior sanity of Wordsworth and his passionate love of pedestrian excursions in the Lake District.

If the love of nature increases the health of the healthy it has often had a beneficial and even a curative effect in disease. The humble and homely kind of landscape that Cowper was able to enjoy was a solace to him.

The power that Nature exercises over landscape-painters has this further beneficial effect that it is a stimulus to work. Those landscape-painters who have delighted most in natural beauty or sublimity have usually been the hardest workers, though it has sometimes happened that the superior perfection of nature has discouraged the artist and disgusted him with his own attempts, leaving him to dream of what he felt unable to realise. It is possible that the power of natural landscape over a human mind might become dangerously excessive in this way, by paralysing its action. The best safeguard against this great and serious evil is an interest in humanity and in human art as distinct from the natural universe. Wordsworth had the interest in humanity which saved

him from being entirely conquered by natural landscape, but his emancipation would have been more complete if he had understood the art of painting. In the case of Turner, notwithstanding a profound knowledge of the natural world there was such a strong art-faculty, and such a disposition to refer to preceding art that he was never enslaved to nature. The mere fact that, having the choice of town or country, he could live in London, is in itself sufficient evidence that his mind had never been overwhelmed by nature to the point of sacrificing its human liberty and individuality.

To sum up the considerations in this chapter it may be said that for most of us, and setting aside exceptional cases of devotion to other ideas like that of Lacordaire,' natural landscape offers a very desirable refreshment and a pleasure favourable to health of body and mind, but that there is some risk of its power over us becoming excessive so as to take from our human activity by plunging us in helpless and endless admiration. Against this danger we have other resources, especially in the human studies (both in real life and in literature), and also in art as a distinct thing from nature. These other studies may become absolutely necessary to us as a *contrepoids* if we allow ourselves to live much within the mighty influence of the external world.

CHAPTER VI.

Landscape as a Reflection of the Moods of Man.

EVERY one who is acquainted with modern literature knows the common artifice of making landscape interesting by associating it with human feelings. This is distinct from the illusion that inanimate nature really has feelings or can sympathise with our own. We may be perfectly rational, perfectly free from superstition of every kind, and still *associate* the phenomena of nature with our own feelings by perceiving an apparent analogy.

The analogy is, indeed, so apparent, that it has generally the defect of being too obvious. Everybody can perceive that calm and beautiful weather is like the serenity of a happy disposition, that gloom in landscape resembles human melancholy, and that rain is a sort of weeping, and that the breezes sigh. The consequence of this extreme obviousness is, that those comparisons which were at first abundantly employed in literature have now become so trite as to be hardly admissible, unless stated with novel forms of language or a quite exceptional force; and it is necessary for poets and prose-writers to exercise their ingenuity in discovering new analogies. The degree of interest that people take in such analogies is clearly proved by the great popularity of writers who state them cleverly. The sudden fame of Alexander Smith was due to an abundance of similes, taken principally from the sea, and exhibiting the analogy between natural phenomena and human experiences in a manner which the public of 1853 felt to be novel and attractive. Simply to say that the ocean raged in tempest would have had no novelty, but this was new:—

> 'His part is worst that touches this base world,
> Although the ocean's inmost heart be pure,
> Yet the salt fringe that daily licks the shore
> Is gross with sand.'

If the shore is pure also, then the simile may be used for another purpose:—

> 'Thy spirit on another breaks in joy,
> Like the pleased sea on a white-breasted shore.'

A young child is described as a

'Silver stream,
Breaking with laughter from the lake divine,
Whence all things flow.'

On due occasion, however, the stream may be made to convey the idea of sorrowful loneliness—

'A week the boy
Dwelt in his sorrow, like a cataract
Unseen, yet sounding through its shrouding mists.'

It was to the abundance of such comparisons as these, which were really novel and well done, that the *Life Drama* owed its astonishing popularity, a curious evidence of the tendency to feel interested in such analogies that must have prevailed amongst the public in the middle of the nineteenth century. They are to be found in almost all modern poets; but other examples would not be so valuable as this, because in the *Life Drama* there was hardly any other element of vitality. Many of the critics of those days seemed to be under the impression that similes which connected landscape with the experiences of man were poetry in themselves, and almost the whole of poetry. They quoted them with enthusiastic delight, and it did not seem to occur to them that a closer study of human joys and sorrows might have supplied richer and more valuable material to a creative mind than the fanciful comparison of them with a waterfall or a sea-beach.*

If, however, it is an exercise of fanciful ingenuity to connect human feelings with inanimate nature by an active search for new and striking similes, the truth still remains that nature constantly acts upon our minds by suggestion, and that the moods of landscape do really answer with surprising exactness to our human moods, so that it is natural for us to see in it a reflection of ourselves.

We ought, nevertheless, if we desire to think accurately, to be well on our guard against a very prevalent error. It so happens that English landscape, especially that of the south of England, does very fairly and

* Such comparisons occur rarely and occasionally in the great works of poetry. Here is one in *The Idylls of the King* which is not unlike Alexander Smith's work, the difference being that in Tennyson these similes are not of so much importance relatively to the main substance of poetic invention:—

'He was mute;
So dark a forethought rolled about his brain,
As on a dull day in an ocean cave
The blind wave feeling round his long sea-hall
In silence.'

Merlin and Vivien.

adequately represent the moods of our own English minds, which are as cheerful as the kind of sunshine we possess, and melancholy in the same moderate degree as our dull yet not unpleasant weather. Hence we are exposed to a great delusion. We are likely to imagine that landscape, all the world over, answers to human nature as nearly as it does in our own island; but if we take into consideration the landscape of the whole world, we shall find in different countries such great excesses of a single characteristic that the landscape of one locality, or even of one region, is no more adequately representative of human moods and sentiments than the cry of one wild animal is representative of human music. I pass by this subject for the present only to deal with it more at length in another chapter.

The way we really act with regard to the sympathetic appearances of landscape is the following. We go through the world in various moods of our own determined for us by many different causes, more by the state of our health than by any other, and so long as the moods of the natural landscape are not in harmony with our own feelings we pay very little attention to them, but when they come so near as to seem to reflect our feelings, the coincidence attracts our attention, and we exclaim, 'How gay and pleasant the scenery is!' or 'How melancholy it is!' as the case may be. I am not, just now, alluding to poets and painters, but to the common world. Poets and painters have very mobile feelings, and are constantly on the look-out for suggestions, so that they may often attune themselves purposely to the natural landscape as they would to variations of sentiment in music. But as for *le commun des mortels*, the way they do is to notice landscape expression in nature when it happens to coincide with their own feelings. If they walk out in a garden with friends after a good dinner in summer, and notice the dying light behind the purple hills, they may say it is a bit of fine colour that reminds them of Titian, but they will not be saddened by it. A lonely widow who has dined by herself, and goes out to walk on her terrace to muse, and ponder, and remember, shall see the same effect, and be so touched by it that her eyes will be filled with tears. So with the brightness and cheerfulness of nature; there is absolutely no degree of gaiety in the appearances of the natural world that can bring joy to the sufferer from recent and acute misfortune, but if you are cheerful already there is no doubt that a beautiful sunny landscape in spring or summer will itself seem cheerful to you, and bring you increase of cheerfulness. Man brings into the natural world the light of his own soul as we take a candle into a room at night, and when

the natural world happens to be bright and beautiful it sends back to us from every side the light that we ourselves bring with us.

The best proof that nature is but accidentally a reflection of the moods of man is that human beings are able to live cheerfully, and even merrily, in the midst of dreary and gloomy landscape. It may have occurred to the reader, in the course of his travels, to pass through many places which seemed to him so depressing that he felt it would be impossible to live there without falling into low spirits, and yet on observing the inhabitants he perceived that they were as cheerful as people are in the loveliest scenery. The plain truth is, that the cheerfulness of people depends upon the healthiness of the place they live in far more than on the pleasantness of its appearance. Certainly there are regions which have a most depressing effect on their inhabitants, but if you inquire carefully into the causes of such depression you will always find that they are either connected with positive diseases or with a lowered condition of vitality. The plain of La Bresse, in the east of France, is one of these regions. It is cheerful enough in appearance, with its plentiful sunshine and wide horizons bounded by blue mountains in the remote distance, and it is a rich country, with ample supplies of excellent provisions, but in spite of these advantages it is depressing because it is insalubrious.* At some distance to the north-west lies the hilly region called the Morvan, which is not more cheerful in appearance, as the horizons are generally limited by near hills or woods, and there is more rain, but the population is brighter and more lively because the region is extremely healthy. Those parts of the Alps where the peasantry are dull, and seem as if life were a burden to them, are always the unhealthy parts; it is not the scenery that oppresses, but either the air is bad or there is an insufficiency of light.

This leads us to the unexpected conclusion that a dismal and dreary country may be productive of sufficient cheerfulness by its salubrity quite to overcome the effects of its dismal appearance on the mind, so that its aspects will not reflect the human minds that dwell in it, whilst, on the other hand, regions of open space and sunshine, like La Bresse, or of beautiful mountain forms, like the Valais, may fail equally to reflect the human sadness which is due to invisible causes.

It may happen, even, that the natural landscape which has all the

* The region is not quite so unhealthy as it used to be now that many of its ponds have been done away with. There were formerly between two and three thousand of them, and much malaria from marshy places.

elements of melancholy in itself produces pleasurable feelings that the gayer and brighter landscape somehow fails to arouse. Dreary and desolate landscape is not saddening to every one, and there are those to whom the very melancholy of it is sweeter than brightness and gaiety. For me I love 'grey boulder and black tarn,' and shreds of rain-cloud flying on the northern wind better than that island valley of Avilion

> 'Where falls not hail, or rain, or any snow,
> Nor ever wind blows loudly; but it lies
> Deep meadowed, happy, fair with orchard lawns
> And bowery hollows crowned with summer sea.'

NEAR THE COAST AT CAYEUX-SUR-MER

Original Etching by EDMOND YON

This is an example of that dreary kind of scenery which is to be found near the French coast. It is very much appreciated by some French landscape-painters, for the same reason that impels some of our own painters to choose wild and marshy places where there are stagnant pools with rushes, and melancholy skies and distances, and few inhabitants except aquatic birds. The choice of such subjects is one of the many artistic reactions from over-civilisation and the abundance of gay and pretty trifles that exist near prosperous capitals.

CHAPTER VII.

The Art of Describing Landscape.

MANY years ago the writer of this volume composed a sort of essay on a subject related to this, which he entitled, *Word Painting and Colour Painting*. It has been preserved in subsequent editions of *Thoughts about Art*, but after severe abridgment. The existence of that early essay does not appear to preclude a chapter on the same subject in the present volume, as more than twenty years have elapsed between the two, and the author's ideas upon the subject may be supposed to have gained some clearness from increase of experience during such an interval.

The admirers of that uncouth and ungracious genius, Thomas Carlyle, appear to think that the art of describing landscape was extinguished by his much-quoted sneer, 'Come, let us make a description!' Could not the same invitation to set to work be addressed to the maker of anything whatever? Might not a wheelwright say to his partner, 'Come, let us make a cart-wheel!' and would the wheel be the less likely to answer its purpose for having been planned beforehand, and not produced by the fortuitous concourse of ash-wood and iron? A description that is well done is a product of human skill, and I propose to show in the present chapter, first that a good description is worth the trouble and industry that it costs, and secondly, how the labour may be most intelligently applied.

The external world is always around us and always exercising some kind of influence upon us. Sometimes it is beautiful and charms us, sometimes it is terrible and oppresses us. It may weary us by its monotony, or be so varied and interesting as to compensate for the lack of other variety and excitement. Whatever the nature of it, the landscape that surrounds us, even during the most temporary residence, even for a day when we are travelling, can never be without some degree of influence upon us whether we are conscious of that influence or not. The subject, therefore, is one of universal importance, though the importance of it varies considerably in degree. Sometimes a few words of landscape description may be enough, but those few require to be chosen carefully; at other times a page is not too much, but the page

must be written with some art or else the labour which the author ought to have undertaken will be cast upon the innocent reader.

It is assumed by the enemies of landscape art in literature that it is an elaborate affectation. It need not be either affected or elaborate. It may be at the same time one of the most sincere forms of literary art and one of the most simple. The sincerity of it is assured when the writer is naturally observant and sets down just what he sees; the simplicity of it is partly the result of straightforwardness and partly the achievement of skill.

The almost complete absence of landscape description in some authors is a serious literary defect. It is so in some ancient historians, and particularly in Caesar. Nothing is more vexatious, in reading Caesar, than the frequent absence of assistance from the author when we desire to picture to ourselves the marches of his army and the positions occupied or abandoned by the enemy. His mind appears to have acted quite mechanically, as if it had been of itself a sort of military calculating machine full of figures representing the strength of forces and the distances that had to be traversed; but taking small account of the wants of a reader who had not seen the country with his own eyes. I have no desire to imply that a general should describe countries with the affectionate enthusiasm of an amateur of landscape beauty, that is not his affair; but it can hardly be too much to expect that a military writer should give a clear account of important topographic facts, however briefly, and Caesar only does this sometimes. The description of Vesontio, in the first Book, with the Dubis almost surrounding it is truthful; Lake Leman is mentioned as flowing into the Rhone (Lib. I. cap. viii.), and he notices the extreme slowness of the current of the Saône, that river Arar which 'influit incredibili lenitate, ita ut oculis in utram partem fluit judicari non possit.' He tells us, too, that the Rhine is very wide and deep (Lib. I. cap. ii.) and that the Jura is high. The general, and to us very interesting, description of the British Islands (Lib. I. cap. xiii.) is a most acceptable bit of ancient geography, but it cannot be called landscape. There is a short description of the remarkable situation of Alesia on a lofty hill, at the foot of which two rivers flowed, whilst before it extended a plain about three miles long, and everywhere else there were other hills at a little distance from the first, and of the same height. This is a piece of sufficient military description. That of Avaricum is so far clear that the nature of the surrounding country is in some degree intelligible; but what shall we say of the total and disappointing absence of landscape description with

regard to so important a city as Bibracte? Caesar does not even tell us whether Bibracte stood on an isolated hill or was situated on the banks of a river, which would have settled the question for all time whether the site of Augustodunum, or the summit of Mount Beuvray, was the real position of the Aeduan capital. There are now good reasons for believing that it was a hill oppidum like Alesia, and situated on the Beuvray, a lofty hill detached from others and well supplied with water-springs near its summit round which exists a line of strong Gaulish fortification enclosing the remains of many Gaulish and Gallo-Roman dwellings.* It has, however, been uniformly taught for centuries that Bibracte was on the site of Augustodunum, also a place very strongly marked by nature, and which a word of description would have made recognisable by all posterity. It might be argued that when Caesar pursued the Swiss and turned aside to go to Bibracte for provisions, he was eighteen miles from the city and could not be expected to describe it, especially as the great battle occurred before he could get there. Yes, but as he afterwards wintered at Bibracte he must have known the place; yet he thinks the mere name of it is enough. 'Ipse Bibracte hiemare constituit.' The absence of landscape description also prevents us from knowing exactly at what place he crossed the Saône, and what was his itinerary from the right bank of the Saône to the place where he fought the Swiss.

Let me not be misunderstood as desiring to advocate either a picturesque or a sentimental style of landscape description in military writers. They have something else to think of than the rose of dawn or the melancholy of autumnal twilight; they have nothing to do with the artistic or the poetical side of landscape. But although a military writer is neither painter nor poet, he ought to be a perfectly clear topographer; he ought always to let the reader know exactly in what kind of country every battle is fought, every march undertaken, and he ought to describe the natural defences of every fortress. This is understood by modern war correspondents who always attempt, with various degrees of ability, to describe for us the scenes of military operations. Notwithstanding the literary merits of Caesar's simple style, it may safely be asserted that if the narrative of his campaigns had been written by a good newspaper man of the present day we should have known more about the aspect of the country.

If we expect some information from military writers, still more is

* To prevent a possible disappointment to some antiquarian tourist I ought to add that the dwellings have been carefully buried again after each annual excavation.

it natural to count upon it from the larger leisure of a civilian who undertakes to narrate his wanderings. The modern traveller knows this, and cultivates his descriptive powers, the danger being rather on the side of unintelligent forcing than neglect. It will not be a waste of time to inquire what are the qualities that a traveller ought to seek for in his descriptions.

He should never waste valuable space in empty expressions of impotence — never say that anything is so astonishing as to be indescribable. Everything in nature can be described if only the writer has a proper command of language. If he is determined not to shirk his duty he can make everything intelligible by comparisons, but he must avoid the two forms of untruth — falsehood by inadequacy and falsehood by exaggeration. Nay, even a certain deviation from the exact truth is permissible if the traveller allows his personal preferences to be so visible that there can be no mistake about his partiality. Dickens was not exactly a truthful describer, but he was so candid about his own feelings that the reader could easily make the proper allowance for them. It was also a perfectly well-known characteristic of his to let his fancy play very freely on what he saw, therefore, *as coming from him*, a very fanciful description could hardly be called a false description, because every intelligent reader would be sure to make allowances. Dickens was so constituted that when once his fancy had begun to be lively it ran away with him like an excited horse. Here is an example of what I mean in the description of stumps of trees seen on some wild land in America :—

'These stumps of trees are a curious feature in American travelling. The varying illusions they present to the unaccustomed eye as it grows dark are quite astonishing in their number and reality. Now there is a Grecian urn erected in the centre of a lonely field; now there is a woman weeping at a tomb; now a very commonplace old gentleman in a white waistcoat, with a thumb thrust into each armhole of his coat; now a student poring on a book; now a crouching negro; now a horse, a dog, a cannon, an armed man, a hunchback throwing off his cloak and stepping forth into the light. They were often as entertaining to me as so many glasses in a magic lantern, and never took their shapes at my bidding, but seemed to force themselves upon me whether I would or no, and, strange to say, I sometimes recognised in them counterparts of figures once familiar to me in pictures attached to childish books forgotten long ago.'*

This description is fanciful in the extreme, but as the writer frankly lets his own personality be visible from beginning to end, and as the reader knows that the fancy was a faculty extremely active in Dickens,

* *American Notes*, chap. xiv.

there is no falsehood, even though, to a landscape-painter, not one of the trees would have seemed like the 'very commonplace old gentleman in a white waistcoat, with a thumb thrust into each armhole of his coat,' an image that rose like a Cockney ghost in the brain of the novelist of the London middle classes. The case is far otherwise when an inferior writer attempts to palm off a poor invention as the product of the higher imagination. Here is an attempt at sylvan description by Disraeli which is intended to be striking and magnificent. The passage occurs in *Coningsby*:—

'The wind howled, the branches of the forest stirred, and sent forth sounds like an incantation. Soon might be distinguished the various voices of the mighty trees, as they expressed their terror or their agony. The oak roared, the beech shrieked, the elm sent forth its deep and long-drawn groan, while ever and anon, amid a momentary pause, the passion of the ash was heard in moans of thrilling anguish.'

All this is mere pinchbeck. It is neither the record of observed facts, like a sound bit of honest work from nature, nor a truthful description of strange fancies that really occurred to the author in the presence of nature, as those fancies got into the head of Dickens when he was jolted in the coach in the twilight over the horrible corduroy road. The distinction established between the voices of the trees is an absurdly unreal distinction. No real student of nature would have made it. What really happens in a storm is a great confused noise caused by the friction of innumerable leaves and the whipping of twigs, with the occasional rough creaking rub of a branch against another that happens to be near enough, and perhaps (but this is rarer) the fracture of a broken bough or the crash of a falling trunk, but even these last would not be distinctly audible in the hubbub of tempest unless they were near at hand. If the reader cares for a true account of sylvan noises I have no doubt that the following by Charles Kingsley may be relied upon. He is speaking of the 'High Woods,' in the West Indies:—

'Here, when the forest giant falls, as some tell me that they have heard him fall, *on silent nights*, when the cracking of the roots below and the lianes aloft rattles like musketry through the woods, till the great trunk comes down, with a boom as of a heavy gun, re-echoing on from mountain-side to mountain-side; then,

'Nothing in him that doth fade,
But doth suffer an *air*-charge
Into something rich and strange.'

This is good, but it is not direct observation, it is only hearsay.

Now let us see what Kingsley could tell us about something that he had seen with his own eyes. A less intelligent traveller would have attempted to convey the idea in general terms by telling us that the trees were high and bright with various kinds of flowers. Kingsley takes the trouble to make us understand how and in what way the tropical forest is magnificent:—

'You catch sight, it may be, of the head of a tree aloft, blazing with golden trumpet-flowers, which is a poui, and of another lower one covered with hoar-frost, perhaps a croton; and of another, a giant covered with purple tassels: that is an angelim. Another giant overtops even him. His dark, glossy leaves toss off sheets of silver light as they flicker in the breeze, for it blows hard aloft outside while you are in stifling calm: that is a balata. And what is that on high? Twenty or thirty square yards of rich crimson a hundred feet above the ground. The flowers may belong to the tree itself. It may be a mountain mangrove, which I have never seen in flower, but take the glasses and decide. No. The flowers belong to a liane. The wonderful Prince of Wales's feather has taken possession of the head of a huge mombin, and tiled it all over with crimson combs, which crawl out to the ends of the branches, and dangle twenty or thirty feet down, waving and leaping in the breeze. And over all blazes the cloudless blue.'

This seems to me an excellent example of description. It does not fail on the side of inadequacy like a lazy attempt in which the author falls short from sheer want of energy, and on the other hand it does not weary by exaggeration. There are light, colour, life, and motion, all combined, as it seems to me, in one passage of moderate length with almost perfect art. I hardly know what to point to as the most effective touch where every syllable tells, but these few words contain the elements of light, colour, life and motion in themselves ending with an excellent contrast. '*His dark, glossy leaves toss off sheets of silver light as they flicker in the breeze; for it blows hard aloft outside while you are in stifling calm.*'

When Kingsley visited the West Indies he was just in that condition of mind which is most favourable to success in description. He had long desired to see that wonderful tropical nature with his own eyes, and when he found himself amongst it the perfect freshness of his sensations, combined with strong excitement of the mind, gave great vigour to his pen. He was at a time of life, too, when a writer who has lived wisely is at his best, because he has gained mastery over language without having lost the power of enjoyment.

A traveller who did not set out with the intention of word-painting, but to see how men of English race fared wherever they had settled, said that 'travellers soon learn when making estimates of a country's

value, to despise no feature of the landscape.' If Sir Charles Dilke wrote that rather from the political than the artistic point of view it is not the less accurate in any case, for the landscape, however uninteresting it may seem, or even ugly, is never without its great influence on human happiness and destiny. The interest in human affairs which Sir Charles Dilke has in common with most men of any conspicuous ability, does not prevent him from seeing landscape-nature as well as if his travels had no other object. His description of the Great Plains of Colorado is an excellent example of that valuable kind of description which is not merely an artful arrangement of sonorous words, but perfectly conveys the character of the landscape and makes you feel as if you had been there.

'Now great roaring uplands of enormous sweep, now boundless grassy plains; there is all the grandeur of monotony and yet continual change. Sometimes the distances are broken by blue *buttes*, or rugged bluffs. Over all there is a sparkling atmosphere and never-failing breeze; the air is bracing even when most hot; the sky is cloudless and no rain falls. A solitude which no words can paint and the boundless prairie swell convey an idea of vastness which is the overpowering feature of the Plains. . . . . The impression is not merely one of size. There is perfect beauty, wondrous fertility, in the lonely steppe; no patriotism, no love of home, can prevent the traveller wishing here to end his days.

'To those who love the sea, there is a double charm. Not only is the roll of the prairie as grand as that of the Atlantic, but the crispness of the wind, the absence of trees, the multitude of tiny blooms upon the sod, all conspire to give a feeling of nearness to the ocean, the effect of which is that we are always expecting to hail it from the top of the next hillock.

'The colour of the landscape is in summer green and flowers; in fall-time yellow and flowers, but flowers ever.'*

If the reader will take the trouble to analyse this description he will perceive that, although powerful, it is extremely simple and sober. The traveller does not call in the aid of poetical comparisons (the only comparison indulged in is the obvious one of the Atlantic), and the effect of the description on the mind is due to the extreme care with which the writer has put together in a short space the special and peculiar characteristics of the scenery, not forgetting to tell us everything that we, of ourselves, would naturally fail to imagine. He corrects, one after another, all our erroneous notions, and substitutes a true idea for our false ones. The describer has been thoroughly alive, he has travelled with his eyes open, so that every epithet tells. The reader feels under a real obligation; he has not been put off with mere phrases, but is enriched with a novel and interesting landscape experience.

* *Greater Britain*, Chap. XII.

In a good prose description, such as these by Kingsley and Sir Charles Dilke, the author has nothing to do but to convey, as nearly as he can, a true impression of what he has actually seen. The greatest difficulties that he has to contend against are the ignorance and the previous misconceptions of his readers. He must give information without appearing didactic, and correct what he foresees as probable false conceptions without ostentatiously pretending to know better. His language must be as concise as possible, or else important sentences will be skipped, and yet at the same time it must flow easily enough to be pleasantly readable. It is not easy to fulfil these conditions all at once, and therefore we meet with many books of travel in which attempted descriptions frequently occur which fail, nevertheless, to convey a clear idea of the country. A weak writer wastes precious space in sentimental phrases or in vague adjectives that would be equally applicable to many other places, and forgets to note what is peculiarly and especially characteristic of the one place that he is attempting to describe.

The semi-poetical kind of description, of which prose-poetry is the vehicle, is a perilous kind of literary labour, for this reason. It is nothing without a gush of sentiment, and if the reader once begins to see reasons for suspecting that the sentiment is assumed for the occasion he very soon has enough of it. It may be that in this, as in other departments of fine art, the enthusiasm is often only acting, but it ought to seem real and spontaneous. Here the qualities of clearness and accuracy are not enough; it is necessary to touch the reader's feelings and get him into a sort of enchanted condition in which he will follow a long description from beginning to end without weariness, and especially without thinking that the most enthusiastic metaphors and similes are overdone. Mr. Ruskin is the greatest master of this difficult branch of art, and if he is not quoted in this place it is not from any want of appreciation, but because his finest descriptions are too well known for quotation to be necessary, and also because they are generally long, so that to borrow them would be a kind of annexation. Again, they would lose much of their meaning if detached from the argument that led up to them, as for example in the description of Sion, in the chapter on 'Mountain Gloom,' the neglected condition of the city is connected with an argument about the effects of mountains and Roman Catholicism upon the mind. The description itself begins in a plain way with noticing a number of minute facts, all bearing more or less directly on the main purpose, and finally, when the reader's mind has been sufficiently prepared by dwelling in the details of a strange and melancholy

city he is led up to poetry in the conclusion, which I cannot help quoting, after all :—

'Beyond this plot of ground the Episcopal palace, a half-deserted, barrack-like building, overlooks a *neglected vineyard*, of which the clusters, black on the under side, snow-white on the other with lime-dust, gather round them a melancholy hum of flies. Through the arches of its trellis-work the avenue of the great valley is seen in descending distance, enlarged with line beyond line of tufted foliage, languid and rich, degenerating at last into leagues of grey Maremma, wild with the thorn and the willow; on each side of it, sustaining themselves in mighty slopes and unbroken reaches of colossal promontory, the great mountains secede into supremacy through rosy depths of burning air, and the crescents of snow gleam over their dim summits, as—if there could be Mourning, as there once was War, in Heaven—a line of waning moons might be set for lamps along the sides of some sepulchral chamber in the infinite.'

This is very daring, and perhaps no other writer of sound prose would have ventured quite so far as the sepulchral chamber in the Infinite; but the effect is powerful in connexion with the melancholy note of the whole subject, that of Mountain Gloom, which really has to do with the spirit of the Universe. The art here consists in lifting the subject upon a sufficiently high plane of thought to make imaginative sublimity in keeping and appropriate. To understand the necessity for this the reader has only to suppose that a traveller of ordinary type visits the same town of Sion and takes note of its backwardness in a commonplace spirit, without reference to the persistent influences of overwhelming nature on the mind. Such a traveller could never effect the transition from the details of ill-kept streets to 'a line of waning moons,' and if he made any attempt at sublimity he would fall into the bathos of the false sublime.

Novelists have a great advantage over travellers and essayists in being able to connect descriptions of landscape with human feeling in persons quite outside of themselves. The reader probably remembers how very skilfully the 'Mountain Gloom' of the Isle of Skye is connected, in *A Daughter of Heth*, with Coquette's depressed and unhappy state of mind when she discovers that she is in love with Lord Earlshope. She wants to get away, she is like a prisoner on the yacht, and the gloomy mountains (so different from the brighter and more open French scenery she had been accustomed to in childhood) deepen her melancholy more and more. 'To me these hills look dreadful,' she says. 'I am afraid of them. I should be glad to be away.' It is this suffering of one poor little human heart that gives an appalling power to the scene.

'Far up amid the shoulders and peaks of Garsven there were flashes of flame

and the glow of the western skies, with here and there a beam of ruddy and misty light touching the summits of the mountains in the east; but down here, in the black and desolate lake, the bare and riven rocks showed their fantastic forms in a cold grey twilight. There was a murmur of streams in the stillness, and the hollow silence was broken from time to time by the call of wild fowl. Otherwise the desolate scene was as silent as death, and the only moving thing abroad was the red light in the clouds. The *Caroline* lay motionless in the dark water. As the sunset fell the mountains seemed to grow larger; the twisted and precipitous cliffs that shot down into the sea grew more and more distant; while a pale blue vapour gathered here and there, as if the spirits of the mountains were advancing under a veil.'

In the simple prose description the essential merits are truth to nature, and the art of insisting on those points that the reader is not likely to imagine without suggestion and help. The skilful writer of travels makes us not only see the country, but feel its atmosphere around us; and yet, to effect this, he has recourse to very simple means. With the prose-poet the case is somewhat different. He begins by observing facts as carefully as the other, but when he has made the facts quite plain to us, he leads us on from the region of positive truth to the realm of imagination, and before we are quite aware of the change a wonderful transition is effected; we are raised from the common earth and carried into the land of dreams. The difficulty here is in delivering the mind from the real and lifting it beyond reality with the help of reality itself.

In professed poetry this transition has not to be made. It is expected that the poet shall have made it for himself before beginning to write, and if he has not quite succeeded in doing this, we feel that he has begun to write with an inadequate inspiration. This was the one great fault of Wordsworth—that he often wrote verse when not completely in the poetic mood. Is this poetry?

'In one of those excursions (that I hope I shall never forget) with a young friend through North Wales, I left Bethgelert at bedtime, and went westward to see the sun rise from the top of Snowdon. We came to the door of a rude cottage at the foot of the mountain and roused the shepherd, who is a trustworthy guide for strangers, then sallied forth after some refreshment. It was a close, warm, dull night, with a dripping fog, that covered all the sky; but without being discouraged we began to climb the mountain side.'

Does this prose become poetry when versified as follows?

'In one of those excursions (may they ne'er
Fade from remembrance!) through the northern tracts
Of Cambria ranging with a youthful friend,
I left Bethgelert's huts at couching-time,
And westward took my way, to see the sun

Rise, from the top of Snowdon. To the door
Of a rude cottage at the mountain's base
We came, and roused the shepherd who attends
The adventurous stranger's steps—a trusty guide;
Then, cheered by short refreshment, sallied forth.

'It was a close, warm, breezeless, summer night,
Warm, dull, and glaring, with a dripping fog,
Low-hung and thick, that covered all the sky;
But, undiscouraged, we began to climb
The mountain-side.'

No, this is not poetry yet; it is only prose in metre: but a very little farther in the same work (the fourteenth book of the *Prelude*) we come upon a description sufficiently sustained in its emotional elevation to be truly poetical:

'The moon hung naked in a firmament
Of azure without cloud, and at my feet
Rested a silent sea of hoary mist.
A hundred hills their dusky backs upheaved
All over this still ocean; and beyond,
Far, far beyond, the solid vapours stretched,
In headlands, tongues, and promontory shapes,
Into the main Atlantic, that appeared
To dwindle, and give up his majesty.'

From this and many other examples I should infer that Wordsworth was a prose-poet; that is to say, one who rises from prose to poetry, and then falls back again into the heavier medium, as a flying-fish plays between water and air, whilst the complete poets sustain their flight, and scorn the ocean of the commonplace that tumbles heavily beneath them. Without imaginative conception and musical expression there is no poetry; but good poetry requires knowledge at first-hand also, therefore the poets are very close observers. There is a most interesting passage about the study of landscape-nature in a letter by Tennyson,* from which I borrow the following account of his way of taking mental memoranda:—

'There was a period in my life when, as an artist, Turner for instance, takes rough sketches of landskip, &c., in order to work them eventually into some great picture, so I was in the habit of chronicling, in four or five words or more, whatever might strike me as picturesque in nature. I never put these down, and many and many a line has gone away on the north wind, but some remain—*e.g.*

"A full sea glazed with muffled moonlight."

* Addressed to Mr. E. S. Dawson, of Montreal, and dated November, 1882. See *The Academy*, No. 629.

'Suggestion: the sea one night at Torquay, when Torquay was the most lovely sea village in England, though now a smoky town. The sky was covered with thin vapour, and the moon was behind it.

"A great black cloud
Drag inward from the deep."

'Suggestion: a coming storm seen from the top of Snowdon. In the *Idylls of the King:*

"With all
"Its stormy crests that smote against the skies."

'Suggestion: A storm which came upon us in the middle of the North Sea.

"As the water-lily starts and slides."

'Suggestion: Water-lilies in my own pond, seen on a gusty day with my own eyes. They did start and slide in the sudden puffs of wind till caught and stayed by the tether of their own stalks—quite as *true* as Wordsworth's simile, and more in detail.

"A wild wind shook—follow, follow thou shalt win."

'Suggestion: I was walking in the New Forest. A wind did arise and—

"Shake the songs, the whispers, and the shrieks,
Of the wild wood together."

'The wind, I believe, was a west wind; but, because I wished the Prince to go south, I turned the wind to the south, and, naturally, the wind said "follow."'

The landscapes of Tennyson are generally distinguished by their brevity and concentrated force; the other quality of first-hand observation they have in common with the more diffuse landscape descriptions of Wordsworth. In Shelley the observation is not so close, original, or accurate; but the poetical spirit is so strong in him that the comparative deficiency of substance is easily forgiven. His mind moves in a dream-world, vast and vague, which rarely gains any very definite clearness. Here is a vision of land and sea by starlight:—

'The mountains hang and frown
Over the starry deep that gleams below,
A vast and dim expanse, as o'er the waves we go.'*

Islands are met with afterwards in the course of the voyage and thus described, the reader will see with how little definition:—

'Winding among the lawny islands fair
Whose blosmy forests starred the shadowy deep,
The wingless boat paused where an ivory stair
Its fretwork in the crystal sea did steep.'†

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* *Revolt of Islam*, Canto I. 23. † Ibid. Canto I. 51.

When the scene is transported to a mountain-lake, the lake is certainly mentioned; but we can scarcely say that it is described:—

'The rock-built barrier of the sea was past,
And I was on the margin of a lake,
A lonely lake, amid the forests vast
And snowy mountains.'*

The following magnificent lines have the peculiar quality of Shelley's landscape-work in the greatest perfection. They were probably suggested by the Rhone, but of course the poet keeps clear of localised geography. The choice of epithets in the first line is most artful in its expression of the power of a great current:—

'Till down that mighty stream, dark, calm, and fleet,
Between a chasm of cedarn mountains riven,
Chased by the thronging winds whose viewless feet,
As swift as twinkling beams, had under heaven
From woods and waves wild sounds and odours driven,
The boat flew visibly. Three nights and days,
Borne like a cloud through morn and noon and even,
We sailed along the winding watery ways
Of the vast stream, a long and labyrinthine maze.'†

It is remarkable that as Rossetti was a painter he should not have taken a stronger interest in landscape. Such landscape bits as occur in his poems are good and sometimes admirable, but they are rare. Even 'The Stream's Secret' does not contain much about the stream, although we have it on the authority of Mr. William Bell Scott, who was a fellow-visitor with Rossetti at Perkill Castle, in Ayrshire, that the poem was written, as it were, from nature, or at least in the presence of nature.‡

There is hardly any stanza in which the stream itself has such an important place as in the following where a night effect and an effect of sunshiny morning are brought close together for contrast—see in how few words!—

* *Revolt of Islam*, Canto IV. 4. † Ibid. Canto XII. 33.

‡ 'Published in 1870, it was written so late as in the autumn of 1869, and Mr. William Bell Scott has told me how he frequently used to look for Rossetti as the dinner hour drew near, and almost invariably found him lying in the little cavern a-sprawling in the long grass and bracken along the banks (of the river Penwhapple). He considered it one of his very best productions, and it certainly cost him the most labour, very probably his opinion being due to that fact as well as to its having been written "direct from nature."'—*Life of D. G. Rossetti.* By William Sharp.

'Dark as thy blinded wave
When brimming midnight floods the glen,—
Bright as the laughter of thy runnels when
The dawn yields all the light they crave;
Even so these hours to wound and that to save
Are sisters in Love's ken.'

In 'Rose Mary' there are some glimpses of landscape, seen in the beryl, which show great strength of mental vision and bring the scenes before us with a word or two. We see the weir and the broken water-gate, and afterwards stand where the roads divide and the river is like a thread beneath us; then the 'waste runs by,' and we come to the place 'where the road looks to the castle steep,' and there are seven hill-clefts, one of them filled with mist. But in all Rossetti's poems there is nothing in the way of landscape-painting comparable to the weird little marine picture in 'The King's Tragedy':—

'And we of his household rode with him
In a close-ranked company;
But not till the sun had sunk from his throne
Did we reach the Scotish Sea.

'That eve was clenched for a boding storm,
'Neath a toilsome moon half seen;
The cloud stooped low and the surf rose high;
And where there was a line of the sky
Wild wings loomed dark between.'

This example gives evidence of one of the many superiorities that literature has over painting.* A writer, whether of prose or verse, is not compelled to introduce the reader to any scene without preparation, and it is one of the best known and most useful literary artifices to lead the reader gradually on till he is made to expect a description, and even to desire it. In this case the reader accompanies the royal household and so comes to the sea-shore, when he naturally wants to look seawards (as we all do when we reach the sea-side on account of the fascination exercised by so great a spectacle as that of the waste of waters), and the poet gratifies the wish he has created. In prose romances the novelist often describes unpleasant scenery till we feel the full tedium of it, and then he relieves our desire by a description of an approach to a more pleasant place that seems quite charming when, at last, we get there.

* Compensated, more or less completely, by superiorities of another order that painting has over literature.

Landscape description in literature has been treated with intense and unintelligent scorn by some critics, but it only deserves contempt when it is out of place or ill done. A narrative of real or fictitious events is never quite complete or satisfactory unless we are told something about the sort of country where they happen. We always desire to fill in, however broadly, a landscape background for ourselves.

The commonest vices of bad landscape description are tediousness and false sentiment. Tediousness comes from want of selection, but there is another vice connected with the art of choosing which, if not so tiresome, is certainly more provoking. A writer leads us to a place that we want to know something about; he makes a description of it, but fails to mention something that is quite essential to our understanding of the place. A traveller will sometimes attempt to describe a building, and forget to mention the style of its architecture, or he will mention an avenue of trees but take no note of their species, or he will talk of a valley and mountains without giving any idea of their proportions. Sometimes a describer will waste valuable space in absurd comparisons that lead the unwary wrong, when fewer words might have given a truer picture. Even in conversation, with the great help of questions, we are sometimes strangely baffled by the want of describing power in others. They have been to some place that we are interested in, but we meet with the utmost difficulty in getting a clear account of it out of them.

As for the vice of false sentiment it is one that is very easily cured. A writer has nothing to do but to ask himself whether he really feels the emotions that he connects with the natural scene. Do the bright, dancing waves of the Mediterranean make him feel gay in the southern sunshine? Does the gloomy calm of the Highland loch make him really feel oppressed and sad? If they do so much it is only a part of veracity to describe these effects upon the mind, but if it does not matter to him what may be the moods of nature, and he pretends to be affected by them that he may produce an impressive paragraph, then I should say that his false sentiment will very probably be found out, and that even if undetected it is superfluous.

CHAPTER VIII.

Land and Sea in the Odyssey.

I TAKE the *Odyssey* as a subject of study, rather than both the Homeric poems, because a limit is convenient in materials when it is imposed in space, and also because the references to nature are more frequent in the tale of Odysseus than in the history of the Trojan War. My quotations shall be made from the English prose translation by Butcher and Lang, because they will interrupt the reader less than quotations from the original Greek and fit better into the texture of my own prose, whilst the fidelity of such a translation makes it almost as useful for our present purpose as the original, the chief loss being the majesty of the versification, only to be felt by the small minority who unite accomplished scholarship to an appreciation of poetic art in language, and imperfectly even by them.

Homer is not a picturesque author in the conscious modern way. He does not set himself to describe and produce effects, does not study the art of word-painting, and has not either the strength of affection for nature that makes a modern poet dwell upon the details of a scene, or the consciousness of pictorial power that makes him take a pride in elaborating a description. Still, there was in Homer a sentiment with regard to nature which, though not that of a landscape-painter, was strong and genuine in its way. He was nearer to nature than many a literary man of the present. There is, in his poetry, a frequently expressed sense of contact with the natural world which, if not quite the same thing as picturesque enthusiasm, is at least equally refreshing. All who have been brought close to nature by the experiences of wild travel, or by life in places not yet spoilt by mechanical civilisation, feel that Homer had lived in their world, that world in which life is natural yet, and where strength and courage may increase themselves by healthy exercise.

This feeling of contact with nature is, to me, one of the most delightful associations of the *Odyssey*. The account of the landing after the adventure on the raft is as close to the real thing as a passage from *Robinson Crusoe:*

'He rose from the line of the breakers that belch upon the shore, and swam outside, ever looking landwards, to find, if he might, spits that take the waves aslant and havens of the sea. But when he came in his swimming over against

the mouth of a fair-flowing river, whereby the place seemed best in his eyes, smooth of rocks, *and withal there was a covert from the wind, Odysseus felt the river running*, and prayed to him in his heart.'

The river-god hears the prayer, but Odysseus does not feel himself to be out of danger yet, for the following reasons:—

'If I watch in the river-bed all through the careful night *I fear that the bitter frost and fresh dew may overcome me, and I breathe forth my life for faintness, for the river breeze blows cold betimes in the morning.** But if I climb the hillside up to the shady wood, and there take rest in the thickets, though perchance the cold and weariness leave hold of me, and sweet sleep come over me, I fear lest of wild beasts I become the spoil and prey.'

The passage I have italicised is clear evidence that the poet himself had sometimes passed a night in the open air. The same knowledge of rough life is shown by the description of the swineherd's choice of a place of rest when Odysseus has come to Ithaca:—

'Then he went to lay him down even where the white-tusked boars were sleeping, beneath the hollow of the rock, *in a place of shelter from the north wind.*'

Odysseus, after landing from the raft, went up to the wood and there crept beneath some bushes. A common poet would have been satisfied with the general term, but Homer tells us that they were twin bushes of olive, and that one of them was wild olive:—

'Through these the force of the wet winds blew never, neither did the bright sun light on it with his rays, nor could the rain pierce through, so close were they twined either to other, and thereunder crept Odysseus.'

The strong and simple sense of reality which always distinguishes Homer is conspicuous in the washing of Odysseus. In the fresh river water he 'washed from his skin the salt scurf that covered his back and broad shoulders, and from his head he wiped the crusted brine of the barren sea.'

Homer always seems to have accurate local knowledge, even of imaginary places, a characteristic so valuable for giving reality to a narrative that it has often been assumed or imitated by succeeding writers. He knows that, in Calypso's island, the tall trees grew on the border, and that the species of them were alder, poplar, and pine. He gives quite a minute account of the island outside the harbour of the land of the Cyclôpes, 'neither nigh at hand nor yet far off, a woodland isle.'

'Yea, it is in no wise a sorry land, but would bear all things in their season,

* In the original, 'before daybreak.'

for therein are soft water-meadows by the shores of the grey salt sea, and there the vines know no decay and the land is level to plough. Also there is a fair haven, where is no need of moorings, either to cast anchor or to fasten hawsers, but men may run the ship on the beach, and tarry until such time as the sailors are minded to be gone and favourable breezes blow. Now at the head of the harbour is a well of bright water issuing from a cave, and round it are poplars growing.'

This minuteness in describing imaginary localities was due to the accurate observation of real ones. The character of Ithaca is alluded to at different times, and always strongly marked. It is contrasted by Telemachus with the landscape character of Pylos when he declines the offer of horses from Menelaus. Telemachus says he will not take horses to Ithaca because 'there are no wide courses, nor meadow-land at all,' but his local affection breaks out in the exclamation that it is a pasture-land of goats, 'and more pleasant in my sight than one that pastureth horses.' Still, he appreciates the plain as a good place for pasturage and driving. Athene describes Ithaca to Odysseus on his return with reference to the same rugged local character:—

'Verily it is rough, and not fit for the driving of horses, yet it is not a very sorry isle, though narrow withal. For herein is corn past telling, and herein, too, wine is found, and the rain is on it evermore, and the fresh dew. And it is good for feeding goats and feeding kine; all manner of wood is here, and watering-places unfailing are herein.'

And when Athene sheds a mist about Odysseus that he may not recognise Ithaca, we are told that all things showed strange to him, 'the long paths and the sheltering havens, and the steep rocks and the trees in their bloom.'

In the drive of Peisistratus and Telemachus from the house of Nestor at Pylos, the horses 'flew toward the plain, and left the steep citadel of Pylos.' They put up for the night at the house of Diocles, and next day the drive is continued in a decidedly lowland country, 'the wheat-bearing plain,' and they drive on till all the ways are darkened. Finally they come to Lacedæmon, 'lying low among the caverned hills.' Aided by these brief indications we imagine the landscape through which the swift horses speeded on their way.

Odysseus has a sailor-like way of climbing a hill for a look-out. In his account of his own travels he tells King Alcinous that he 'went up a craggy hill, a place of outlook, and saw the smoke rising from the broad-wayed earth in the halls of Circe through the thick coppice and the woodland.' He had also a sailor's appreciation of a good harbour, for wherever there is one it is mentioned just as a sailor

of our own day would mention it. The *actualité* of Homer is indeed so striking in this respect that the most modern travellers remind us of him.* Here is one example out of many. When Odysseus and his companions are sent away from the Court of Aeolus they sail for six days and arrive on the seventh at the stronghold of Lamos. See how minute is the description of the haven:—

'Thither when we had come to the fair haven, whereabout on both sides goes one steep cliff unbroken, and jutting headlands over against each other stretch forth at the mouth of the harbour, and straight is the entrance; thereinto all the others steered their curved ships. Now the vessels were bound within the hollow harbour each hard by the other, for no wave ever swelled within it, great or small, but there was a bright calm all around. But I alone moored my dark ship without the harbour, at the uttermost point thereof, and made fast the hawser to a rock.'

The descriptions of the sea in Homer are powerful in this sense, that they convey to the reader the feeling of its presence or neighbourhood. In this way it has come to pass that the Homeric poems, especially the tale of Odysseus, are closely associated with the sea, an association of which Mr. Lang has made excellent use in his two beautiful sonnets on the *Odyssey*. It is, however, easy to make too much of Homer's marine descriptions. They are, after all, only a form of early art, and it is a mistake to attribute to them the qualities of cultivated observation. A word or two of reality brings us from time to time to the sea-shore or the tossing waves, and we are grateful. When the maidens of Nausicaa have unharnessed the mules they drive them 'along the banks of the eddying river to graze on the honey-sweet clover,' and when they have washed the linen they 'spread it all out in order along the shore of the deep, *even where the sea, in beating on the coast, washed the pebbles clean.*' Nothing can exceed the freshness of this touch. For brief descriptions of the power of wave and wind you have only to turn to any of the pages where the mariners are thwarted by the gods. There is an expression in the twelfth book about the sea darkening under a dark cloud which is the most pictorial bit of marine description in the narrative:—

'But now, when we left, that isle nor any other land appeared, but sky and sea only, even then the son of Cronos stayed a dark cloud above the hollow ship *and beneath it the deep darkened.*'

* A few hours before writing the above lines I had a conversation with an old naval officer about the Mediterranean, and noticed that he talked about the harbours (in the Grecian Archipelago and elsewhere) quite in the Homeric manner.

Whilst Odysseus is on the raft, Poseidon smites it with two exceptionally great waves, the last so powerful that it separates the timbers:—

'While yet he pondered these things in his heart and soul, Poseidon, shaken of the earth, stirred against him a great wave, terrible and grievous, and vaulted from the crest, and therewith smote him. And as when a great tempestuous wind tosseth a heap of parched husks, and scatters them this way and that, even so did the wave scatter the long beams of the raft.'

The epithet here translated 'vaulted from the crest' is the mark of additional power in this wave. The first is not so described, it was only a great wave, but this is a great *overhanging* wave that comes crashing down (what we call a breaker), and so it severs the beams of the raft. The description of water-action in Charybdis, with its mightily pulsating rise and fall, is so real as to have been plainly suggested by something observed in nature either in river or sea:—

'On the one hand lay Scylla, and on the other mighty Charybdis in terrible wise sucked down the salt sea water. As often as she belched it forth, like a cauldron on a great fire, she would seethe up through all her troubled deeps, and overhead the spray fell on the tops of either cliff. But oft as she gulped down the salt sea water, within she was all plain to see through her troubled deeps, and the rock around roared horribly and beneath the earth was manifest swart with sand.'

From all these extracts it is plain that Homer's close intimacy with nature was rather the practical knowledge of a traveller, sailor, breeder, agriculturist, than that delicate observation of forms, effects, and colour, which must enter into the training of a modern landscape-painter. This is a distinction which does not imply censure, as literature is an art quite separate from painting. A writer can bring to the mind recollections of other than ocular perceptions. In Homer we hear the shrill winds blowing in the wake of the hollow ship; we feel the flow of the river; we climb the rough track up to the wooded country; we taste of the honey-sweet lotus; but although the Homeric descriptions have often suggested ideas to painters, they are hardly ever in themselves pictorial. The all but complete absence of colour is a well-known negative characteristic; and it has been inferred that in Homer's time the colour-sense was in a rudimentary condition. Magnus says that Homer uses χλωρός for green, and that only once; but he is so little decided about the hue, that he also employs χλωρός for the colour of honey,* and for

* *Odyssey*, X. 234.

THE WAVE

Painted by COURBET

Reproduced in Photogravure by *BOUSSOD & VALADON*

The original picture is in the Luxembourg Gallery and is very well known. When Courbet painted it he had not the resource of instantaneous photographs, which is perhaps fortunate for the picture, as it expresses what Courbet saw and felt of the wave, and nothing more. Amongst the many pictures or studies of sea-waves produced during the last few years, this is one of the grandest and most animated, though not one of the most elaborate in detail. The waves beyond the principal one are at least equally good, and the whole picture, with its fine sky, carries one to the sea-side on a breezy day.

the pallor of the complexion produced by fear.* The blueness of the sky is never mentioned by Homer; and if κυάνεος meant blue at all, it was confounded so completely with dark brown or black, that he applied it to the hair of Hector, Odysseus, Hera, and Zeus. The epithets used by Homer, and sometimes supposed to have reference to colour, are in reality suggested by different degrees of light or conditions of refulgence, such as splendour and glitter. I do not go farther into this question, having been preceded in the investigation by more competent students; but I may illustrate the subject from other sources. All primitive and little-cultivated persons have a way of confounding what they consider dark colours with black. What are called (by translation from the Gaelic) the 'Black Isles' on Loch Awe are grey rocks, spotted with lighter lichen, and crested with heather, Scotch fir, and beech, offering altogether a rich variety of greys, greens, and purples; all of them pale at a little distance, and as far from black as can be. So I heard a French lady from the south affirm that the landscape of the Morvan was '*noir*,' an impression produced on her mind by comparison with the extremely pale mountain distances of Provence. All that the word 'black' means in such cases is that the scenery is rather dark in comparison with something else. I have never seen the Black Sea, but suppose it to be blue, or blue-green and grey, according to the weather. The Black Mount is purple and green, or blue in distance. *Vino nero*, in Italian, is chromatically as incorrect an expression as 'white wine' when applied to sherry. These expressions are as wide of the truth as Homer's, yet people employ them who are supposed to possess completely developed senses, and who live in a time when the colour vocabulary is extensive. In Homer's time it was very narrow, and a man of genius might be unable to express the variety of his own sensations. One of the few colour epithets used by Homer may be true, ἰοειδέα, violet-hued, as applied to the sea. Under certain effects the Ionian sea must be nearly the colour of a violet. His association of the sea colour with wine, though generally supposed to refer to its darkness only, may possibly have been suggested by effects of sunset when under a purple and crimson sky the waves do really bear some resemblance to the colour of dark-red wine. No doubt Homer's perceptions of colour were primitive and often indeterminate, but the exact degree of a poet's sensitiveness can hardly be ascertained when we have only his writings, and he himself had no terms at his disposal outside of the meagre nomenclature of his time.

* *Iliad*, VII. 479.

CHAPTER IX.

The Virgilian Landscapes.

THE natural progress of the mind towards the feeling and culture of a modern landscape-painter is through that state of feeling which may be simply described by the word 'rural.' The lady who exclaimed, when she saw the Alps for the first time, 'Oh, how *very* rural!' was a little behind the fully developed modern passion for landscape, but she was on the way to it, she was in the preparatory stage. Even in our own day numbers of people are perfectly satisfied with simple ruralism. They enjoy 'the country' as a change from town, they like to visit a farm occasionally and see the folk in hamlets where life is simpler and less sophisticated than in the Champs Elysées and Belgravia. They feel themselves under the influence of the oldest poetical associations when the kine are brought home in the twilight, and the sheep are in the fold. This simply rural sentiment is, as I have said, the beginning of the landscape passion, but it does not die out to be replaced by a stronger feeling. All that seems to happen with regard to it is that some quite modern minds, whilst preserving the old love of the country, add to ruralism something else—a passion for sublimity in wild landscape which has little apparent connexion with rural interests and associations. The poetry of the country is, indeed, so closely associated with the past history of mankind that it would have a good chance of enduring as long as the human race, were it not for one great danger. The progress of scientific agriculture may deprive the country itself of its old romantic charm by substituting a rigid utilitarianism, a visibly exact economy in mechanical methods, for the somewhat loose and easy primitive ways that still in certain regions remind us of the ancient Virgilian husbandry.

The distinction between rural sentiment and the modern passion for wild landscape may be felt at once on referring to any of those studies of perfectly desolate scenery which are produced from time to time by our landscape-painters because they like the wildest nature and enjoy what a classical mind would have called the 'horror' of it, or what we call its sublimity. A dark and lonely highland tarn, a rocky, tree-

less corrie, whose purple precipitous sides glisten under the moisture from its grey cloud, the barren shore of a sea-loch washed by the long tidal waves, an Alpine glacier flowing slowly past the foot of an inaccessible aiguille, a desolate stretch of ocean shore, a view of the Arabian desert with thirsty camels hurrying across the dreadful Nefood; all these are subjects interesting to the modern mind, but outside of that quiet and affectionate enjoyment of rustic life which was the landscape inspiration of Virgil. The genuine rural sentiment is as surely deprived of the solace that it requires in the dreariness of wild nature as it is in the streets of a city. Its happiness is in some picturesque, well-situated farm, where, from dewy dawn to mellow sunset, a man may dwell in health, and plenty, and peace.

The strength and genuineness of the rural sentiment in Virgil have won him credit for more power as the poet of landscape than that which he really possessed. An ancient author easily gets credited with more faculty and insight than were ever really his own. The slightest hint is seized upon as proof of his sensibility and of his watchful keenness of observation. With regard to Virgil this tendency is increased by his own affectionate ways. He really loved the country, the fields, the trees and vines, the oxen and sheep, the peaceful, rural life, and all true lovers of these things love him for his love. He expressed in the most beautiful language the old poetical feeling of rustic humanity that had come down to him from I know not what dumb and nameless ages of far antiquity, and so persistent is the sentiment that it often happens to us in these modern days to be suddenly struck with the Virgilian character of some quiet rural scene, and to remember that the Mantuan poet had noted exactly the same thing nearly two thousand years ago. He did not simply admire nature as a spectacle, but had a true happiness in thinking of the country, so that rural images easily occurred to his mind. His poems do not contain many descriptions, and the few that we find are short, but his references to nature are frequent. He compares the majesty of Rome in her predominance over other cities to that of cypresses lifting their heads high above a brushwood of viburnums. When Horace desires to convey the idea of permanent fame he thinks of enduring bronze, but Virgil thinks of the still more enduring instinct that makes animals love their natural haunts. 'As long as the wild boar shall love the hill-tops and the fishes the rivers, as long as bees shall pasture on thyme and the cicala drink the dew, so long shall last thy praise and the honour of thy name.' Daphnis is told that he is an ornament to his people as the vine is to trees and

the grapes to the vine. Virgil sees clearly that there are differences of rank in the productions of nature; shrubs and heather are not always enough—'If we sing the woods, let the woods be worthy of a consul!' Like all lovers of nature, Virgil is not satisfied with mentioning 'trees' in a vague general way, he must name their species. When Aeneas and his man go to cut wood in obedience to the commands of the Sibyl (Book VI.), we are told that they felled ash-trees and pines and big elms and a kind of oak that could be easily spit with wedges. There is more tree-felling in the eleventh book, and this time are mentioned ash-trees, very tall star-pointing pines, the easily-split oak, and the fragrant cedar. This does not come by chance, it is because the poet had the sylvan sense, he knew the trees and their qualities.

It might readily be argued that in the Eclogues Virgil would assume an interest in the things of the country as a part of his predetermined poetical manner, as we all know that it is a part of a poet's craft to assume and sustain in each composition the state of feeling that is best suited to it. I will not, therefore, insist too much upon the abundant employment of rural reference in the dialogue between Thyrsis and Corydon in the Seventh Eclogue, but the *Aeneid* had no such rustic keynote. In the ninth book Virgil attributes to the mother of Jupiter those tender feelings about groups of trees that he experienced in his own mind with an almost Wordsworthian intensity. 'There was a pine-wood of my own,' she says, 'beloved during many years; there was a sacred grove on the top of the hill whither men brought offerings; it was dark with the black fir and with trunks of maple.' She has given this wood for the construction of a fleet, and now, because of her old tender affection for the trees, she is anxious about the fate of the ships, loving still the very wood they are built of. Jupiter could not promise that the vessels should be exempt from peril during their voyages, but he promised that those which escaped should be changed into sea-deities afterwards. Thus it came to pass that the pines of Ida became nymphs, as we learn in the tenth book. I do not remember anything in Virgil like Dante's sense of the oppressive forest gloom. Dante is frankly afraid of the thick forest:—

> 'Questa selva selvaggia ed aspra e forte,
> Che nel pensier rinnova la paura.'

Virgil has too much science of forestry and love of trees to be afraid of them, and if they are fine ones they suggest the idea of wood-cutting; still he feels the *vastness* of the forest, and Aeneas gazes on

the 'silvam immensam' before he is guided by the doves to the spot whence he may see the glistening of the golden bough :—

'Discolor unde auri per ramos aura refulsit.'

In the seventh book of the *Aeneid* there is a description of the Tiber pouring its flood into the sea with many whirlpools, 'yellow with much sand.' This is a very characteristic touch, and quite modern in its notice both of colour and motion. The descriptions of rocks are slight: you have the bounding of a great block as it rushes down a mountain-side (Book XII.), and stationary rocks may be just mentioned, like the isolated rock in the sea (Book V.), but Virgil's geology does not go into anything like the same degree of affectionate specialisation as his botany. In his day trees were distinguished, but stones hardly distinguished, except in the case of the marbles which Roman luxury sought for and appreciated.

The meteorology of Virgil is confined to a very few descriptions of storms, a ready homage to the beauty of the dawn, and one or two brief descriptions of evening, such as that in the first Eclogue. We have the great storm in the first book of the *Aeneid*, but although the water is powerfully described, the clouds are only just mentioned as darkening the sky. In the twelfth book a squall cloud is used for comparison, and with great effect, but more is said of the devastation caused by it than of its appearance. The descriptions of sunrise scarcely give proof of any direct observation. The sea reddens, and Aurora drives her rose-coloured equipage, or sheds her fresh light upon the earth when she leaves the saffron-coloured couch of Tithonus. The verses,—

'Et jam prima novo spargebat lumine terras
Tithoni croceum linquens Aurora cubile.'

are used in the fourth book of the *Aeneid*, and again, without alteration, in the ninth. The tendency, as in Homer, was to form a sort of *cliché* which would do duty for occasions of sunrise, and this was greatly aided by the mixture of mythology with nature. We are a long way, as yet, from the separate and special observation of one sunrise as distinguished from another. There is a touch in the concluding verses of the second book which seems to imply, notwithstanding the extreme brevity of the expression, a sense of the poetry of star and peak that we find developed in modern literature and art: 'Already the morning star was rising over the crests of loftiest Ida, and bringing back the day.' In the same book occurs that remarkably accurate description of a meteor with its train

of light over the forests of Ida, evidently a recollection of some aerolite whose bright and wonderful passage through the atmosphere Virgil must himself have seen.

Of evening effects I remember nothing in Virgil bearing the stamp of personal observation like that simple account in the first Eclogue of the lengthening of the shadows from the mountains. The beauty of the verse, its soft cadence—soft almost as the falling of the shadows themselves — gives an importance to the passage beyond its science, and the impression of repose is enhanced by the smoke rising from the distant homesteads:—

> 'Et jam summa procul villarum culmina fumant,
> Majoresque cadunt altis de montibus umbrae.'

Here may appropriately come to an end our present study of a poet who loved nature sincerely, though not exactly in our way. He had the enjoyment of the country quite as decidedly as any modern, and was not insensible to the sublimity of the sea, the vastness of the forest, the height of the mountain. He knew agriculture like a farmer, and trees like a woodcutter, but the element that is wanting in his appreciation of nature is the observation of distinct pictures. Any description by Virgil would be applicable to a thousand scenes of that class; the best modern work is the result of particular suggestions or impressions.

THE WOODCUTTERS

Painted by E. DAMERON.

Etched by *A. MASSÉ*

The original picture is in the Luxembourg and is a most truthful representation of a scene very common in and about the French forests. The woodcutters construct picturesque huts for themselves, where they live with their families during the felling season in tolerable comfort. Fire-wood, at least, is abundant, and the huts are easily repaired when they are not perfectly rain-proof. Many of them are inhabited by the makers of wooden shoes, which in France are produced in vast quantities for the peasants. The use of tobacco is perhaps the only innovation that makes this wood-life essentially different from what it must have been in the days of Virgil.

CHAPTER X.

The Landscapes of Ariosto.

I HAVE preferred Ariosto to Spenser as the representative of the Renaissance, both because Ariosto was born earlier and in Italy (the centre from which the Renaissance spirit spread to other lands), and also because he is richer than the English poet in the materials of landscape. Not that Ariosto himself was a close or affectionate observer of the external world, indeed the most striking landscapes are never more than the background of his crowded tapestry, picturesque chiefly in human life and costume; but he had a way of treating landscape that deserves attention for its art. The direct source of his poetic inspiration was the mediaeval romance of chivalry; yet as Ariosto was a cultivated man, a scholar, a reader, and in some degree a traveller, he added to the simple mediaeval art the touches that come from a riper learning and a wider range of experience. Both in Ariosto and the mediaeval writers it is hard to distinguish between the landscape-painting and the geography or minute local topography. The one glides imperceptibly into the other so that it is often hard to say whether the landscape is a bit of pictorial description or a sort of map in which things are drawn according to the usage of those times. I have just been comparing with Ariosto the mediaeval romance of *Meraugis de Portlesguez*, by Raoul de Houdenc (thirteenth century), and I find essentially the same method adopted in both cases, though with far greater skill and richness by Ariosto. The principle is to keep the *dramatis personae* in motion, and to give variety to the story by taking them into unexpected situations. Changes of landscape thus become important, not only as they do to all travellers; but especially because in an adventurous career strange things may be expected to happen in strange places. After a little experience the reader knows quite well that when the poet is leading him into new scenery fresh adventures may be counted upon. It is in this way, and not for any great artistic interest in the landscape itself, that the old romancing poets made use of it; and with this key to their purpose it is amusing to see how cleverly they managed to stimulate flagging interest by a change of scene, and to obtain a little respite from the perpetual invention of human ecstasies and woes. In *Meraugis* we find a knight

riding with a lady along a new road, and it has been snowing in the morning, and they pass by an enclosed wood lower than the road. I should hardly call this landscape, but rather topographic detail. In another place they ride through a dark forest which of course is preparatory to meeting with an adventure:—

'Ainsi chevauchent ambedui,
Parmi la grant forest oscure
Tant qu'à un gué, par aventure,
Ont un chevalier encontré.'

You have a description of a castle in a very fine situation on a rock near a river, a meadow, and a wood:—

'Un chastel, jouste une riviere,
Trop haut. Ne sai de quel maniere
Il fu assis sur une roche;
Mes a tant entailliez la broche,
C'est li plus biax du monde à chois.
Entre le chastel et le bois,
Virent en mi la praierie
La plus bele chevalerie
Qui onques mes fust assemblée.'

In the course of his wanderings Meraugis is riding near the sea, and he discovers a rock far away in the mountains 'Very high and all of a piece, and always green with ivy:'—

'Mult haute et toute d'une pierre
En touz temps verds, qu'ele estoit d'ierre
Bordée tout à la reonde.'

He rides straightway to the rock, but finds it totally inaccessible without doorway, or window, or step, and there are twelve damsels on the top, and he rides round it three times, but seeing no way up at last begs them to say how he is to get there. All this is thoroughly mediaeval in spirit, and in the miniature illustrating the MS. the ladies are represented as sitting on a sort of table-stone, all very well dressed, and supposed to be shaded by one tree that grows up in the middle.

Now I see no real distinction in artistic principle between these descriptions and those of Ariosto. He, too, has his deep woods, his inaccessible rocks, his grandly situated castles, his wild roads or tracks followed by wandering adventurers. But his genius was so inventive, so rich and fructifying, that he gave a new vitality to everything, and he as greatly exceeds the mediaeval writers in the brilliance of his descriptions as in the rapidity and interest of his action. There is no

depth of thought in either, the genius of the poet and the influences of his age were alike unfavourable to any permanent seriousness, he writes simply to amuse, to entertain the reader, and to please himself with the recurring measures and rhymes of a singularly facile versification. He is not always gay, but the occasional shadow of unhappy chance or disagreeable locality does not rest on the verse for long; the stanzas flow swiftly still, like a stream through a wood, sure to get out of it into the sunshine. He is more at home in pleasant places, but does not shrink from the others and has especially the traveller's spirit, never desiring to stay long in one place, whatever may be its charms. His geography, though inaccurate, embraces a vast extent of country. His characters travel everywhere and by all sorts of means, by ship, by river-boat, by ordinary horses, and by that famous hippogriff which flew over land and sea. Astolpho goes out of our world, descends to the infernal regions, rises to the high terrestrial paradise, and finally visits the moon. The poet never shrinks from the responsibility of inventing details, his prodigal genius undertakes to tell everything, and wherever it leads him he sees the configuration of the land. Born, like Virgil, in a warm climate, he has the old Latin appreciation of shady groves, green meadows, sparkling fountains, and running streams, whilst, on the other hand, his most successful effort in uncomfortable description is that powerful one of Roger's hot ride in the eighth Canto, when he goes from one precipice to another, and from path to path, all alike 'rough, solitary, inhospitable, and wild,' till at length, under the fervid heat of noon, he comes to a plain between sea and mountain with a southern aspect, 'burnt, bare, sterile, and deserted.' The sun's rays are reflected from the hills with such intensity that air and sand are on fire with a heat 'more than enough to melt glass.' Every bird lies hidden in the shade, only the cicala makes its wearisome noise to valley and hill, to sea and heaven. For unity of effect, simplicity of motive, and strength of language, this is one of the finest descriptions in literature.*

The same great quality of singleness of effect exists in the far simpler description of the island where Agramant took refuge in his voyage, 'a

* Here is the original:—

'Tra duri sassi e folte spine gia
Ruggiero intanto inver la Fata saggia,
Di balzo in balzo, e d' una in altra via
Aspra, solinga, inospita e selvaggia,
Tanto che a gran fatica riuscia
Sulla fervida nona in una spiaggia
Tra 'l mare e 'l monte, al mezzodì scoperta
Arsiccia, nuda, sterile e deserta.

'Percote il Sole ardente il vicin colle,
E del calor che si riflette addietro
In modo l' aria e l' arena ne bolle,
Che saria troppo a far liquido il vetro.
Stassi cheto ogni augello all' ombra molle,
Sol la cicala col nojoso metro
Fra i densi rami del fronzuto stelo
Le valli e i monti assorda, e 'l mare e 'l cielo.'

little isle without habitations, covered with bilberry and juniper, a pleasant and retired solitude for deer, goats, and hares, little known except by fishermen, who often land there to dry their nets, the fish meanwhile sleeping peacefully in the sea.' This little picture, perfect in its way, is set in the frame of a single stanza.*

Alcina's island, where Roger alights from the winged horse, is intended to be as charming as possible, so Ariosto here gives us his own ideal of a place. The island includes 'cultivated plains, gentle hills, clear waters, shaded banks, and soft meadows.' Then there are 'pleasant bowers of odoriferous laurel, of palm-trees and myrtle, cedars, orange-trees laden with fruit and flowers, a thick shade against the burning heat of summer, and amidst their branches the nightingales sing without fear. Cool breezes wander amongst red roses and white lilies, hares and rabbits play, the deer bound at liberty, and stags fearlessly pasture on the grass.' This is Ariosto's ideal, the ideal of a southern imagination; and to this day nobody has discovered anything pleasanter for rest of mind and body, though some of us in more active moods prefer a storm-swept loch or a stony moor in the Highlands with the bracing northern air. Invariably for Ariosto the notion of pleasantness is associated with shade. 'There lies in Araby a delicious little vale far from cities and villages, in the shadow of two mountains, and all full of old pine-trees and great beeches. Vainly the sun darts his rays thereon, for he cannot penetrate the thick foliage.' When Roland is to go mad because he has seen the names of Angelica and Medor together, a contrast is sought between the beauty of the place and the harshness of the discovery, so the poet brings together the old pleasant elements, 'a stream clear as crystal, a beautiful meadow, many and fine trees.' On the contrary, when Ariosto wants to make us feel dreary he describes 'a vast plain that lay entirely open to the sun's rays, on which neither laurel nor myrtle could be seen, nor cypress, nor ash, nor beech, nothing but naked gravel and perchance some poor sprig of a plant.'

Without being of those critics, justly laughed at by Tennyson, who fancy that a poet 'has no imagination, but is for ever poking his nose

* 'D' abitazioni è l' Isoletta vota
Piena d' umil mortelle, e di ginepri;
Gioconda solitudine, e remota
A cervi, a daini, a capriuoli, a lepri;
E, fuor che a pescatori, è poco nota,
Ove sovente à rimondati vepri
Sospendon, per seccar, l' umide reti:
Dormono intanto i pesci in mar quieti.'

between the pages of some old volume in order to see what he can appropriate,' we cannot help noticing the existence of artistic traditions which sometimes are little better than repetitions of old forms. The influence of Virgil on Ariosto is plain enough at times, especially in his mythological sunrises, one of which occurs curiously out of place in the terrestrial paradise, where you meet with the Apostle John and other saints or prophets, yet at the same time are told, when the sun rises, that Aurora left her old husband, who did not displease her in spite of his great age. In the thirtieth canto Aurora escorts the sun, in the twelfth Apollo drives his horses out of the sea, their coats wet, and Aurora sprinkles yellow and red flowers all over the heaven. I fancy, too, that if Virgil had not specialised his trees Ariosto would probably not have done so to the same extent or on so many occasions, and I am sure that in describing sea storms Ariosto had in view those in the *Aeneid*, and tried his hand in a rivalry that we cannot consider presumptuous. Both poets had rather in view the danger of the vessels than any close study of sky and sea. The clouds cast a veil over the sky, so that neither sun nor star appears, the sea roars below and the winds above, the mariners have to struggle against rain, hail, and darkness. Is not this an almost exact account of the storm in the third book of the *Aeneid?** One stanza is almost a literal translation of four verses in Virgil's first book. I print the passages side by side in a note.† This cannot be an accidental coincidence.

When there is really a strong love of landscape it shows itself quite as much in frequent reference and comparison as in laboured and intentional description. In Ariosto such comparisons are not frequent, yet they are to be met with occasionally. There is a pretty one in the thirty-second canto, where the Lady of Iceland receives notice to leave the castle. 'As one sees in a moment a dim cloud rise from a damp valley to the sky and cover the sun's face, once so bright, with a tenebrous veil, so the lady changed on hearing the hard sentence.' She

* 'Postquam altum tenuere rates,' &c.

† VIRGIL.

'Talia jactanti stridens Aquilone procella
Velum adversa ferit, fluctusque ad sidera tollit.
Franguntur remi; tum prora avertit, et undis
Dat latus: insequitur cumulo praeruptus aquae mons.'

Aeneid, lib. i. 102.

ARIOSTO.

'Ecco stridendo l' orribil procella
Che 'l repentin furor di Borea spinge,
La vela contra l' arbore flagella;
Il mar si leva, e quasi il cielo attinge
Frangonsi i remi; e di fortuna fella
Tanto la rabbia impetuosa stringe,
Che la prora si volta, e verso l' onda
Fa rimaner la disarmata sponda.'

Orlando Furioso, canto xli. 13.

finds a defender, and this gives an opportunity for another comparison which shows rather a more tender regard for the small things of nature than might have been expected from a brilliant story-teller like Ariosto. 'As in the most burning heats of summer, when the earth is most thirsty, a flower, nearly deprived of the fluid that keeps it in life, feels the beloved rain,' so the lady rejoiced on finding her defence undertaken by the daughter of Amon and became glad and beautiful as she was before. There is a curious double comparison to illustrate the beauty of Bradamante, and even a triple comparison if we consider the last line. She is taking off her armour, and her long hair has rolled out of her helmet and fallen over her shoulders, then her suddenly discovered beauty suggests to the poet, first the stage of a theatre when the curtain rises and a scene with a superb building full of gold, and statuary, and painting and lighted by a thousand lamps. This is the first comparison, not very happy, as a beautiful girl's face is far superior to all such things, and even on the stage itself extinguishes them at once. Perhaps the poet felt this, for he next compared her with the sun issuing from behind a cloud, very laudatory, but still not perfect as the sun causes us painful sensations whilst a beautiful face gives unalloyed pleasure. Ariosto may have felt this, too, for finally he tells us that in lifting the helmet from her head the lady showed paradise opening itself.

Ariosto sometimes takes note of rivers and makes his heroes do a little boating upon them, but we do not find much characteristic description. Rinaldo descends the Po in a rowing-boat, and Rodomont out of kindness to his horse puts him on a boat upon the Saône and descends that river with him. He is a day and a night on the river, but there is not a word to indicate its character, not even that single epithet used by Wordsworth, 'gentle.'* Rinaldo is quietly asleep all night whilst the rowers work, and when he awakes all his attention is attracted by the towns they pass, and when there are no towns the difficulty of giving duration to the voyage without description of the scenery is ingeniously overcome by making one of the boatmen tell a story that occupies seventy-one stanzas. Then comes just a touch of landscape description. Whilst they are eating on the boat the beautiful country glides away to the left and the boundless marsh to the right:—

'Fugge a sinistra intanto il bel paese
Ed a man destra la palude immensa.'

* 'Upon the bosom of the gentle Saône
We glided forward with the flowing stream.'—*The Prelude.*

A SPATE IN THE HIGHLANDS

Painted by PETER GRAHAM, R.A.

Reproduced in Photogravure by *DUJARDIN*

One of the most impressive pictures of Highland scenery ever painted. Few works of such originality and vigour have been so fortunate in obtaining immediate recognition. Whilst writing this note I have before me a photograph of the first sketch of the subject, and observe with interest how faithfully the artist adhered to his impression, improving upon it a little in the way of distinction and amplification, but not letting slip any part of the first thought. The only addition of any consequence is the figure and cattle upon the bridge. See page 252.

I remember, too, in the ninth canto, the river that separates Normandy from Brittany, and is described as being in flood, 'swollen and white with foam from melted snow and rain from the hills so that the force of the water had broken and carried away the bridge, the only way of getting across.' Here we have, in literature, a picture bearing a wonderfully close resemblance to Mr. Graham's 'Spate in the Highlands,' even to the incident of the bridge,

'Passando un giorno, come avea costume
D' un paese in un altro, arrivò dove
Parte i Normandi dai Bretoni un fiume,
E verso il vicin mar cheto si move,
Che allora gonfio e bianco gía di spume
Per neve sciolta, e per montane piove,
E l' impeto dell' acqua avea disciolto
E tratto seco il ponte, e 'l passo tolto.'

CHAPTER XI.

Wordsworth.

THE poets we have been studying lived before the age of landscape-painting; Wordsworth was the contemporary of artists who had brought landscape-painting to the greatest perfection and he shared their way of looking at nature.

On this point I have safe testimony. Mr. J. P. Pettitt, who taught me painting in my youth, told me that Wordsworth had often joined him when he was working from nature in the Lake District, and had given clear evidence in his conversation of a knowledge of landscape very nearly resembling that of a modern English landscape-painter. It is highly improbable that a painter would have said as much of Virgil or Ariosto, though he might have received suggestions from their verse to be elaborated by the addition of pictorial knowledge.

It is quite within the truth to describe Wordsworth as a landscape artist in verse who belonged to the age of the great landscape-painters, and whose mind, like theirs, filled itself habitually with images derived from the natural world. He told Crabbe Robinson, with satisfaction, that when a stranger had asked to see his study the maid had shown him a room and said, 'This is master's *library*, but he studies in the fields.' After reading the poems we hardly need this testimony of an observant domestic. Crabbe Robinson said that if the poems had been in Italian many of them might have been classed as 'alla bella Natura;' but the truth is, that many others, not intentionally dedicated to Nature, contain comparisons and allusions that prove even more plainly still how habitually the writer's mind was filled with images derived from landscape. It is so both in his most solemn and his most trivial poems. The magnificent Ode on the 'Intimations of Immortality,' mentions 'meadow, grove, and stream' in the first line, and 'the earth and every common sight' in the second. When he had just read in a newspaper that 'the dissolution of Mr. Fox was hourly expected,' Wordsworth at once composed a poem, and the first two stanzas are all landscape:—

> 'Loud is the Vale! The Voice is up
> With which she speaks when storms are gone,
> A mighty unison of streams!
> Of all her Voices, One!

Loud is the Vale!—this inland Depth,
In peace is roaring like the Sea;
Yon star upon the mountain-top
Is listening quietly.'

He praises a healthy and pretty girl and says that she is fleet and strong and can leap down the rocks like rivulets in May, a comparison which in its health, freshness, and gaiety, is not to be surpassed; but in the second stanza of the same poem, 'Louisa,' there is an association of love with northern English landscape that is the gem of the poem:—

'And, when against the wind she strains,
Oh! might I kiss the mountain rains
That sparkle on her cheek.'

That exquisite little poem about the 'Maid whom there were none to praise,' one of the most perfect short compositions in our language, begins with a landscape association that gives the charm of loneliness and purity:—

'She dwelt among the untrodden ways
Beside the springs of Dove.'

In the *Excursion*, a mind by nature discontented and intolerant of peace leads a

'Dread life of conflict! which I oft compared
To the agitation of a brook that runs
Down a rocky mountain, buried now and lost
In silent pools, now in strong eddies chained;
But never to be charmed to gentleness.'

From these and many other similar allusions to the natural world it would be evident that Wordsworth often thought of landscape, and keenly appreciated not only its beauty but its other qualities also. Yet still, if we had only these allusions, we should not know that Wordsworth surpassed his predecessors in observation even more than he surpassed them in affection. The mere love of nature is not by any means a rare quality in earlier writers. Chaucer had it in great strength, and evidences of it are scattered over the ballad and romance literature of the middle and subsequent ages, often in a single epithet, tenderly repeated. Most of us remember how 'the birk and the broom blooms bonnie,' how 'the primrose spreads so sweetly,' and what loving repetition is given to 'the bonnie mill-dams o' Binnorie.' In 'The Demon Lover' the 'hills of heaven' are pleasant and the sun shines sweetly upon them, but the 'mountain of hell' is 'dreary in frost and snow.'

This sort of landscape characterisation was not uncommon before Wordsworth, and we ought not to undervalue it, as it often lends a grace and charm to poetry by recalling the beauty of nature, but it is without any special knowledge or evidence of study. The most ordinary powers of observation are enough to make a poet use such an epithet as 'fair,' or 'bonnie,' of tree and flower. They are only expressions of admiration like the praise of beauty in woman. Now see how Wordsworth approached a natural scene before he was twenty years old. Here is a description of a lake surface. The poet does not content himself with calling the lake 'fair' or 'bonnie,' but he observes the phenomena of water:—

'Into a gradual calm the breezes sink,
A blue rim borders all the lake's still brink;
There doth the twinkling aspen's foliage sleep,
And insects clothe, like dust, the glassy deep:
And now, on every side, the surface breaks
Into blue spots, and slowly lengthening streaks;
Here, plots of sparkling water tremble bright
With thousand thousand twinkling points of light:
There, waves that, hardly weltering, die away,
Tip their smooth ridges with a softer ray;
And now the whole wide lake in deep repose
Is hushed, and like a burnished mirror glows,
Save where, along the shady western marge
Coasts, with industrious oar, the charcoal barge.'

This may easily be undervalued by a reader of the present day, because it is rather formal and old-fashioned, but it is quite unapproached in delicacy of observation by any previous writer. The young poet is not satisfied with telling us that the lake was calm; he gives us an account of its changefulness, of its life. Unobservant people fancy that a lake is calm all over equally, Wordsworth saw that the surface was dealt with differently by the air in different places, that in some places there were 'plots of sparkling water,' in others dying wavelets, and when the whole lake was hushed in calm the boat disturbed it. The 'blue spots' and 'slowly lengthening streaks' are sky reflections on places slightly roughened by faint local breezes.

This delicacy of observation remained with Wordsworth during the whole of his long life, and often inspired passages of exquisite truth that are entirely lost upon worldly readers, though they make his name dear to every true lover of landscape. He wrote stanzas on a picture of Peele Castle in a storm, and for contrast described it, as he had seen it, in calm weather:—

'So pure the sky, so quiet was the air!
So like, so very like, was day to day!
Whene'er I looked, thy Image still was there;
It trembled, but it never passed away.'

This is the poet's exquisitely beautiful way of telling us that the light airs were just strong enough to disturb the reflection occasionally, but never strong enough to efface it. No poet before Wordsworth would have written anything like that. In this little picture he had the presence of water—a great advantage; but now see what he can do without it:—

'And yet, even now, a little breeze, perchance,
Escaped from boisterous winds that rage without,
Has entered, by the sturdy oaks unfelt,
But to its gentle touch how sensitive
Is the light ash! that, pendent from the brow
Of yon dim cave, *in seeming silence makes*
A soft eye-music of slow-waving boughs.'

This delicacy of observation was not of the eye only. We have a hint in the 'seeming silence' that the ear shared it, and even in his youth Wordsworth listened as well as looked. He listened in the evening hours for 'the song of mountain streams unheard by day *now hardly heard*,' and many a year afterwards

'The little rills and waters numberless,
Inaudible by daylight, blend their notes
With the loud streams.'

The love of nature developed itself so early in Wordsworth, that it seems to have been born with him; but there is an important passage in *The Prelude* which tells us that boyish activity preceded it—'animal activities,' to use his own exact expression, 'and all their trivial pleasures.' This is quite the healthy and natural course of development for a poet or painter of landscape. He should begin by a taste for pedestrianism, skating, boating, and so gain an intimacy with nature not to be acquired in cities; then, if he has the instinct, his mind will gradually open itself to a delight in nature quite different from physical exercise.

'I loved whate'er I saw, nor lightly loved,
But most intensely; never dreamed of aught
More grand, more fair, more exquisitely framed
Than those few nooks to which my happy feet
Were limited.'

The love of nature at this time was so strong that it became oppressive—a state of mind dangerous to its balance, as we have other faculties to cultivate than that of perpetual and ecstatic admiration.

'When I began in youth's delightful prime
To yield myself to Nature, when that strong
And holy passion overcame me first,
Nor day nor night, evening or morn, was free
From its oppression.'

There is a splendid passage in *The Prelude*, too long for quotation,* in which the poet acknowledges a great obligation to these early influences of landscape, which had given his mind confidence, faith, and a support in sorrow. This was written when the oppression of the landscape influence had passed away, and what remained of it was felt to be purely beneficent. That influence was one of the main causes of the extremely serene calm that distinguished the life of Wordsworth, and made him not much liked by petulant people who are always wanting excitement. It must, indeed, be admitted that his placid enjoyment of an uneventful existence, and his satisfaction with his own wise choice in life, made him easily tolerant of dull passages in his own poems, but here the penalty falls only on the reader; for Wordsworth himself the love of nature was a refuge against that dissatisfaction with mankind which troubles all those who think, and perverts so many to cynicism. It is a great thing to have a secure refuge from the insincerities of society and the meanness of politics. Wordsworth roamed about his hills and valleys, and remained like the Wanderer, 'vigorous in health, of hopeful spirits undamped by worldly-mindedness or anxious care.' If any proof were needed that the love of natural beauty was not, in his case, and need not be, a deteriorating influence, it might easily be shown that it was accompained by a correlative love of moral beauty. The magnificent ode in which, at the age of thirty-five, he dedicated himself to Duty, contains two immortal lines, where he places the moral beauty of a satisfied conscience above all other.

'Stern Lawgiver! yet thou dost wear
The Godhead's most benignant grace;
Nor know we anything so fair
As is the smile upon thy face.'†

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* The passage alluded to is towards the end of the second book. It begins with the words, 'If this be error,' and finishes with 'purest passion.'

† These two lines would be incomparable in their elevation if we had not in Shelley's *Hymn to Intellectual Beauty* three verses of such transcendent majesty:—

'Love, hope, and self-esteem, like clouds depart
And come, for some uncertain moments lent.
Man were immortal and omnipotent,
Didst thou, unknown and awful as thou art,
Keep with thy glorious train firm state within his heart.'

It was a marked characteristic of Wordsworth's genius to take note of small things as well as great, and yet not to lose himself in any insignificant details. The poem called *The Pilgrim's Dream*, in which there is a colloquy between a star and a glow-worm, gives evidence that the author was conscious of this breadth of interest, and, indeed, are not star and glow-worm equally beautiful and just equally wonderful, absolutely inexplicable both of them? Some minds rise to the sublime but disdain the humble. Byron's mind was of this temper; others love humble landscape and shrink from the sublime as George Eliot did; others rise to sublimity at one time, and condescend to little things at another, as Victor Hugo does; but in Wordsworth the magnificence of nature at once, and, as it seems, inevitably, suggests what is lowly and unobtrusive. His mind knew the 'union of extremes' the 'natural bond between the boldest schemes Ambition frames and heart humilities,' and it was he who told us, with profound significance, that—

'Beneath stern mountains many a soft vale lies,
And lofty springs give birth to lowly streams.'

The passages that prove Wordsworth's affectionate interest in places that less observant people go by without a glance are too numerous for quotation; but here in four lines is an example dear to me who know many such places:—

'Between two sister moorland rills,
There is a spot that seems to lie
Sacred to flowerets of the hills,
And sacred to the sky.'

In the poem entitled *Fidelity*, where the first object is to produce the impression of loneliness, there is a picture, sketched in the fewest possible words, of a tarn 'far in the bosom of Helvellyn,' with a lofty precipice in front of it, and December snow in June. Byron described Lake Leman, but would scarcely have noticed a gloomy, little nameless tarn in the hollow of an English hill.

Wordsworth's interest in the world of plants had the same inclusive character. His description of yew-trees, written at the age of thirty-three, and classed among the Poems of the Imagination, contains firm truth and noble imagination also, and remains permanently the one description of that tree. The allusions to other trees are frequent, but not so new in literature* as the descriptions of clouds and water-surfaces. The poems about flowers are very original in a playful affectionateness that appeared silly to men of the world. Wordsworth wrote two poems

* Except, perhaps, the poem on the old Thorn.

on the Daisy, two to the small Celandine, two about the flower called 'Love-lies-bleeding,' and we all know what he had to say about the primrose by the river's brim, and the 'never-ending line' of daffodils 'along the margin of a bay.'

The Lake district is not rich in interesting buildings, and it may be for this reason that Wordsworth has so much less to say than Scott concerning the influences of architecture. When he does describe a building there is little that is specially characteristic, but the surrounding landscape is not likely to be overlooked. The address to Kilchurn Castle is not individual, it would apply equally well to other strongholds of the kind; but the poet does not fail to tell us that Kilchurn is associated with 'mountains, torrents, lake and woods.' So with Norton Tower, there is no detail of architecture, it is simply 'an edifice of warlike frame;' but the prospect from it is carefully described:—

'It fronts all quarters, and looks round
O'er path, and road, and plain, and dell,
Dark moor, and gleam of pool and stream
Upon a prospect without bound.'

The sonnet on a 'Highland Hut' was written because there were 'gay wild flowers' on its roof, and because the smoke issuing from it shone 'in the greeting of the sun's first ray.' Another strong reason was because the limpid mountain rill 'avoided it not.' The humble Scottish graveyard attracted the poet's attention, because part of its enclosure was a 'rugged steep that curbs a foaming brook.' So we hear of a piece of old military architecture in Switzerland because it can be mentioned in connexion with a remarkable river and a lake:—

'We met, while festive mirth ran wild,
Where, from a deep lake's mighty urn,
Forth slips, like an enfranchised slave,
A sea-green river, proud to lave
With current swift and undefiled
The towers of old Lucerne.'

Whilst giving full credit to Wordsworth for his merciful sentiment about animals, and whilst feeling especially grateful to him for the two most noble lines with which the second part of '*Hart-Leap Well*' comes to such an admirable termination, we cannot help perceiving that the motive of the poem lay in the connexion of the incident with a place. The hart had died close to a spring beneath a hill, and so the animal's death became a Wordsworthian subject. In like manner *The White Doe of Rylstone* is associated with the landscape of Bolton Abbey.

LUCERNE

Drawn by J. M. W. TURNER, R.A.

Reproduced in Photogravure by *ALFRED DAWSON*

This view of Lucerne is a very good example of military architecture, following the form of a hill and also crossing a river. This may be seen (or might have been before the general destruction of mediaeval fortifications) in many other places on the Continent, but I do not remember a better example than Lucerne. At Fribourg the towers on the steep declivity of the Gotteron valley are still connected by fragments of the old climbing wall. The most wonderful instance in the world of a military wall, with towers, following the ups and downs of a mountainous country, must indubitably be the Great Wall of China.

On comparing Turner's drawing with a photograph of the same view, taken from the same spot, one cannot fail to be struck with his extreme ingenuity in disguising the unpicturesqueness of obtrusively ugly materials. The towers are picturesque in reality, though not quite so much so as Turner has made them; but the ordinary Swiss houses in towns are dreadful structures, and those at Lucerne are no better than the rest. They are quite inadmissible in a work of art, yet Turner has conveyed some hints of their real character in gables, large roofs, and numerous windows, without in the least sacrificing his poetic dream to the Philistine hardness of the fact.

Of all poets Wordsworth is the most decidedly a student of landscape; and he was so much a student as to be sometimes a defective artist. The experience of painters throws a valuable side-light on the poetical production of Wordsworth. It is well known amongst landscape-painters that the habit of making careful studies, though excellent in itself as a means of acquiring knowledge, may have a bad effect upon production, if it is carried into what ought to be works of a higher inspiration. It occasionally happened that Wordsworth inserted studies in poems, a practice always wisely avoided by Tennyson, who makes use of nature for suggestion only, and concentrates the idea suggested in a form of expression as remarkable for brevity as for power. But whatever may have been the artistic errors of Wordsworth, every true lover of landscape must think of him with gratitude. He was not the first poet who felt the influences of nature; but he was the first who took the trouble to observe with the attention of a painter, and his mind was so constituted that landscape was more significant for him than it had been for any of his predecessors. To trace all the subsequent ramifications of his influence would require a long essay. All English prose and poetry that deals with landscape in this century is more or less indebted to him. Some of his successors appear at times more powerful than their original; they are, at least, more artful. Others remind us pertinently of his own saying, that lofty springs give birth to lowly streams.

CHAPTER XII.

Lamartine.

I HAVE felt some hesitation about adding Lamartine to my list of selected poets; not because he is at all wanting in interest relatively to the subject of landscape, but because French poetry is so little read in England, and generally so little liked. For this there are many reasons. One is that as French literature is not included in what is called classical education, an Englishman is not obliged to admire a French poet as he must admire Homer or Virgil, and so he says what he thinks, which is so commendable a practice that it might be extended to other studies with advantage. Another reason is that very few people appreciate any foreign poetry whatever. In reading poetry in a foreign language we encounter two distinct classes of difficulties. We do not feel the good qualities of the verse so readily as a native does, and also (this is less generally known) we are much more alive to certain inevitable imperfections that he passes over easily from habit. In many passages of what, on the whole, are fine poems, there are words and phrases inserted merely to fill up a void. An accomplished native reader glides over these to get his pleasure farther on, but the less rapid comprehension of the foreigner is arrested by them. Again, there are many words in poetry which do well in their place, if rapidly passed over, but which hardly bear examination, and the foreigner looks at details too closely, as a man who only half understands painting scrutinises the clots of colour and thinks the work is coarse, when it is in reality well calculated. Even in our own language we perceive the strangeness of certain epithets when the poetry has had time to become old-fashioned. If the reader will turn to the second quotation from Byron on page 23 of this volume and ask himself fairly why the blue of the Highlands is said to be 'swelling,'* he may feel this, and 'infant rapture' may seem even a little ridiculous. To enjoy poetry thoroughly, and even to appreciate it, we need insensibility to some things quite as much as a delicate sensibility to others. The music of verse, too, when thoroughly enjoyed, makes the meaning

* I suppose that the word 'swelling' was used by Byron to imply that as we gaze on the blue of a Scottish mountain it grows upon us, or possibly that it may spread over the distant landscape by the changes of effect, but fancy a Frenchman trying to translate it! 'L'azur qui s'enfle! Qu'est-ce que cela peut vouloir dire?

of it a secondary consideration, and to enjoy the music, even when we do not read aloud, we must imagine good reading which includes correct and facile pronunciation. Then there is poetical diction, the custom of each country and time accepting certain forms and expressions as being suitable in poetry but not in prose; and the poetical diction of one country often seems odd to the inhabitants of another. Expressions that seem from association poetical to a native are destitute of this quality to a foreigner. For example, the French word *guéret* is much used in poetry. Strictly, it means a field that has been ploughed but not yet sown, but why the poets like it is hard to say. They are also very fond of *pampre*, which means a vine-stalk in leaf, a word seldom used in prose, except in descriptions that aspire to be poetical, but to an Englishman 'the vine,' though not reserved for poetry only, seems more poetical than *pampre*. The intentional simplicity of certain forms is apt to appear childish to a foreigner, whereas a native perceives it to be the result of art. These are some reasons why poetry is not easily appreciated out of its own land, but by far the strongest reason of all is that poetry requires sympathy in the reader far more than prose, and there is hardly any sympathy between nations. Between England and France the want of sympathy is continually manifesting itself on small occasions and great. In the arts it shows itself, on the French side, in contemptuous reference to English painting, sculpture, and architecture, confounding genius and mediocrity in indiscriminate condemnation; whilst on the English side it is principally evident in the unsympathetic reception of French literature of the higher kind, and in the application to it of standards of taste which are purely British and have nothing to do with the genius of the French language or the traditions of French thought. We are the more exposed to this error with regard to poetry that the construction of our own tongue makes it a better instrument for poetic use, a fact admitted by Lamartine himself and by all who know enough of both languages to have an opinion on the subject.*

Lamartine was not by any means so close an observer of landscape as Wordsworth, but he associated landscape with human life as intimately, and he excelled Wordsworth in one important quality or power, that of fusing the landscape and the human elements inextricably together. You may like his sentiment or not, you may call it human feeling, which is praise, or 'French sentiment,' which in English is an

* English is a better poetical instrument than French, and yet there are several favourite effects of resonance and metre in French poetry that are unattainable in English, so that French poetry has a value and interest of its own.

expression of antipathy; but in any case you must admit that there is a feeling, a sentiment of some kind which absorbs all the landscape and the human life together into itself, and this I take to be one of the marks of true genius in poetry. I should say that if a poet were to make an accurate piece of painstaking, observant description of some place and then insert that in a poem for which it was not originally intended it would be a sign of imaginative sluggishness or feebleness in him; but if the landscape suggested itself in the course of his narrative as entering necessarily into the influences which developed the characters of his personages or determined their actions, then it would truly belong to the poem and therefore be artistically superior to the other though less minutely faithful to nature. Now in *Jocelyn*,* from beginning to end, the landscape influences are so closely interwoven with the tissue of the poem that they cannot be detached from it. The story is a story of loss and separation, of permanent sorrow endured with patience, but ending only in the grave. The first note is a note of sadness, and when a gleam of happiness comes in the middle of the tale it leads to a discovery by which grief is made more grievous and loneliness still more lonely. The scene is laid in the Alps of Savoy, and it is the use of the mountain influences which gives the work its special interest for us. Lamartine was born at Mâcon, a place not in the mountains, though hills and the cliff of Solutré are near, but from Mâcon in clear weather before rain you see the snowy dome of Mont Blanc and may distinguish the dark rocks with a telescope. This was enough to awaken an early interest in Alpine scenery which was soon increased by travel. And here I have a word to say about the association of language with locality.

We know that language is not permanent, that the tongues we use are not of any great antiquity, and that they are not likely to last for ever. We know that the hills are incomparably older than any language, and likely to outlast our present forms of speech, though geologists may show how they have been slowly upheaved and subsequently sculptured, and how they are gradually wasting in their long decay. Still, in spite of this knowledge, every region is, for us, associated with one particular language. We do not say 'The White Mountain' even in speaking English; we say 'Mont Blanc.' We do not say 'Mount Lomond,' 'Mount Cruachan,' 'Mount Nevis;' we adopt the Gaelic *Ben*. We never speak of Lake Fyne, Lake Goil; but of Loch Fyne, Loch Goil. We talk about the Sierra Morena and the

* Lamartine's most important poem.

Sierra Nevada as if we had some knowledge of Spanish, and if we do not talk of a *lago* we have turned *laguna* into lagoon. Nay, our Alpine climbers have adopted a whole French vocabulary about the Alps, and when they quit that it is to use, not English, but German. You cannot open an English Alpine book without finding French expressions. The writer will not say 'The White Tooth,' or 'The Green Needle,' but *La Dent Blanche* and *L'Aiguille Verte*. He will not say 'crevice' but *crevasse*, not 'ice-stream' but *glacier*, not 'snow-slip' but *avalanche*. The reason is that when actually impressed by the presence of the real thing he associates with it the term used in the country. And so it comes to pass that although a poem about the English Lake district is best in English, a poem on the Western Alps seems most natural in French, at least to one who knows them. The French words have the authentic association with nature, one of the principal advantages of *Jocelyn*.

The first mountain-note is touched delicately in the prologue by one of those preparatory suggestions that a master in literature employs:—

'J'étais le seul ami qu'il eût sur cette terre
Hors son pauvre troupeau ; je vins au presbytère
Comme j'avais coutume, à la Saint-Jean d'été,
À pied, *par le sentier du chamois fréquenté*.'

In these four opening verses you have a hint of both the dominant ideas that run through the whole poem and give it perfect unity. The '*il*' in the first line is the hero, the '*je*' simply a friend who speaks in the prologue and epilogue. The first line gives the idea of sadness and solitude, the second that of surrounding poverty, and further indicates that the hero is a priest by an allusion to his dwelling. The third line dwells on this connexion by mentioning a festival of the Church, and the fourth makes the reader at once aware that he is in a land of high mountains. The two following lines fix the idea thus suggested much more strongly :—

'Mon fusil sous le bras et mes deux chiens en laisse,
Montant, courbé, ces monts que chaque pas abaisse.'

Jocelyn, the priest, has been appointed to this remote village by his bishop in these terms :—

'Il est, au dernier plan des Alpes habité,
Un village à nos pas accessible en été,
Et dont pendant huit mois la neige amoncelée
Ferme tous les sentiers aux fils de la vallée.

'Là, dans quelques chalets sur les pentes épars,
Quelques rares tribus de pauvres montagnards,
Dans les champs rétrécis qu'ils disputent à l'aigle,
Parmi les châtaigniers sèment l'orge et le seigle,
Dont le pâle soleil de l'arrière-saison
Laisse à peine le temps d'achever la moisson.'

Here he passes the remainder of his existence and dies, having occupied a part of his leisure in writing an account of certain events that happened to him at the time of the Revolution, and the autobiography forms the substance of the poem. His family is ruined, his mother and sister have emigrated to America; he himself, a proscribed priest, takes refuge in the mountains, where a herdsman provides him with bread; and during his solitary life there two refugees come to the same place, but one of them, the father, is killed by his pursuers, and the son takes refuge with Jocelyn in his cave. This son is afterwards discovered to be a daughter, disguised to give her a better chance of safety in flight, and Jocelyn loves her, but, being a priest, is obliged to go elsewhere and renounce her. He bears his trial, and lives thenceforth the life of a lonely ecclesiastic. The only exception to the continual presence of mountain scenery is a brief visit to Paris, slightly and rapidly sketched.

Jocelyn's refuge, when proscribed, is near a lake high in the mountains of Savoy, and there is evidence enough, for a reader who knows such lakes, that Lamartine had appreciated one of them for himself. The delightful miniature geography of such places is only known to those who love them. Observe this exquisite little sketch of a small lacustrine promontory:—

'L'un à côté de l'autre, en paix nous nous assîmes
Sur un tertre aplani, qui, comme un cap de fleurs,
S'avançait dans le lac plus profond là qu'ailleurs,
Et dont le flot, bruni par l'ombre haute et noire,
Ceignait d'un gouffre bleu ce petit promontoire;
On y touchait de l'œil tout ce bel horizon;
Une mousse jaunâtre y servait de gazon,
Et des verts coudriers l'ombre errante et légère
Combattant les rayons, y flottait sur la terre.'

The same lake is described towards the close of a magnificent page of landscape in the canto entitled 'Deuxième Epoque:'—

'Lac limpide et dormant courme un morceau tombé
De cet azur nocturne à ce ciel dérobé,
Dont le creux transparent jusqu'au fond se dévoile
Où, quand le jour s'éteint, la sombre nuit s'étoile,

Où l'on ne voit flotter que les fleurs du lotus,
Que leur poids de rosée a sur l'onde abattus,
Et le duvet d'argent que le cygne sauvage,
En se baignant dans l'onde, a laissé sur la plage:
Golfes étroits, cachés dans les plis des vallons,
Aspects sans borne ouverts sur les grands horizons.'

Certainly, this is gracefully and beautifully done, especially the line about the narrow inlets hidden in the folds of the valleys. Here is a delightful bit of lake-shore, with its fine sand and its wall of rock protecting a hillock all the greener for its shadow :—

'Au bord du lac il est une plage dont l'eau
Ne peut même en hiver atteindre le niveau,
Mais où le flot qui bat jour et nuit sur sa grève,
Déroule un sable fin qu'en dunes il élève.
Là, le mur du rocher, sous sa concavité,
Couvre un tertre plus vert de son ombre abrité.'

Some English readers will know the poem 'La Lac,' universally known in France both for the extreme skill with which the poet has associated the beauty of its scenery with melancholy caused by human loss, and for the deep feeling in the music by Neidmeyer.* I remember hearing that exquisite thing sung one evening an hour after sunset on a very beautiful lake, and when the singer came to the 'parfums légers,' a faint breeze brought us a delicate odour of honeysuckle from a shadowy islet under the lingering light. 'Tis twenty years ago, and now there is a new meaning in the words :—

'Que le vent qui gémit, le roseau qui soupire
Que les parfums légers dont l'air est caressé,
Que tout ce qu'on entend, l'on voit ou l'on respire,
Tout dise; Ils ont passé!'†

In *Jocelyn*, when he comes back to revisit his Alpine solitude, the lake is dreary and under a sad effect :—

'Le lac déjà souillé par les feuilles tombées,
Les rejetait partout de ses vagues plombées;
Rien ne se reflétait de son miroir terni,
Et son écume morte aux bords avait jauni.'

There is hardly, in the poem, anything that can be called a definite description of a mountain; it is not much in Lamartine's way to attempt

* It is curious that Lamartine was vexed when this poem was set to music, and yet to-day, when his fame is temporarily eclipsed by that of Victor Hugo, Neidmeyer's music recalls Lamartine's name to thousands.

† Often, but incorrectly, the word '*aimé*' is substituted for '*passé*.'

set portraiture, but he makes you constantly feel the august presence of the lofty peaks by passing allusions to their majesty, as, for example, in the powerful lines about Mont Blanc in a thunderstorm which are merely a comparison with another influence on the soul, the poet comparing the power of a great cathedral at certain hours with what the ear feels on receiving the

'Onde,
Qui des pics du Mont Blanc s'épanche, roule et gronde
Quand s'efforçant en vain, dans cet immense bruit,
De distinguer un son d'avec le son qui suit,
Dans les chocs successifs qui font trembler la terre
Elle n'entend vibrer qu'un éternel tonnerre.'

Here may come to its close a study which I feel to be more inadequate than its predecessors, both because Lamartine's landscape is so closely interwoven with the sentiment of each poem that to appreciate its value the only way is to read the poem itself, and the whole of it, and also because the best passages are generally long, and exceed the limits of quotation. I feel discouraged too by the clear knowledge that French poetry lies outside of English sympathies, so that an essay upon it is addressed to very few, and yet it is hard to understand how any one can despise such touching and melodious verses as those famous ones that begin with the little picture of an Italian shore :—

'Sur la plage sonore où la mer de Sorrente
Déroule ses flots bleus, au pied de l'oranger,
Il est près du sentier, sous la haie odorante,
Une pierre petite, étroite, indifférente
Aux pas distraits de l'étranger.'

CHAPTER XIII.

Landscape and the Graphic Arts.

A GREAT delight in the beauty or grandeur of natural landscape exposes the enthusiastic lover of it to a kind of error for which I do not find any exact parallel in other tastes and pursuits. His enjoyment of it is so great that he would willingly go beyond enjoyment and undertake the toil of graphic representation, in order to preserve for himself, or convey to others, the glory of the natural world. After much labour, he makes two disheartening discoveries. The first is that landscape art does not readily convey to others the emotion experienced by the artist; the second is that, although objects seen in nature may produce a most powerful impression, a truthful representation of the same objects may have scarcely any perceptible effect upon the spectator. Besides these causes of probable disappointment, there remains the misfortune, belonging in an equal degree to no other form of art whatever, that landscape art is avowedly unable to represent nature without sacrifices of a kind requiring especial indulgence, and for which nobody who has not studied the subject will make the necessary allowances.

This bald statement of the case might leave the reader in doubt if it were not followed up by a more detailed argument. I propose, therefore, in the present chapter, to give the reasons for believing the two first assertions. As for the third, which concerns the 'sacrifices of a kind requiring especial indulgence,' I need not go deeply into it here, because it has been fully dealt with in other works.

It has just been affirmed that landscape art does not readily convey to others the emotion experienced by the artist.

The reader will observe that I have been careful not to make this assertion too absolute. I do not go so far as to say that the emotion is *never* conveyed by art, only that it is not readily conveyed. With this limitation we shall find the principal cause of disappointment in the lives of artists who devote their energies to landscape. They do not generally fail from want of power in representing objects, for most of them can make sufficiently truthful studies, their failure is not of that tangible and material nature, it is more subtle and elusive, so that they feel bewildered by it and cannot tell where to look for the cause of it.

The reason is that the picture, although a product of emotion, fails to excite in the mind of the spectator an emotion like that which gave it birth. Let us suppose the case (indeed, it is not imaginary) of an artist who has a passionate love for the sublimity of mountain scenery and who paints it, as he believes, with his whole soul. He comes with his picture to London, and finds, perhaps, that it does not excite any sense of the sublime, yet the natural scene was of a high order and his feelings had been strongly excited. He cannot overcome what seems to him the public apathy about mountain scenery, but is that really the state of the case? Many people, no doubt, are quite absolutely apathetic about mountain scenery, they do not care for it in the least, though they may use a few conventional expressions of admiration, because it is the fashion, in our century, to have feelings about landscape. But it is not these perfectly apathetic people who disappoint an artist and make his efforts a failure. He knows that there are numbers of such people in the world, and he no more expects them to be impressed by his pictures than a clergyman expects atheists to be moved by an affecting sermon. A painter addresses himself to the minority who enjoy, in nature what he represents in art. Failure and disappointment consist in his inability to overcome the indifference felt by these to the message which his art has to deliver. 'I paint,' he thinks, 'with the utmost warmth and sincerity of feeling; I love nature with all my heart, I am profoundly impressed by the grandeur and beauty of the world, and willing to give my best labour to illustrate it, and yet my feeling does not communicate itself, through my art, to people who are, nevertheless, by no means incapable or apathetic in themselves. I am driven, then, to the conclusion, that for some reason which I do not understand, my art fails to express my feeling so as to make it intelligible to others.'

I believe this difficulty to be far greater in landscape than in any other department of the fine arts. Those who have overcome it, by finding some expression of their feeling that is intelligible to others are the successful and famous men. All their deficiencies are forgiven them and they are placed in a situation almost unassailable by criticism. There is Corot, for instance, not by any means a strong painter in the representation of tangible things, such as rocks, trees, and buildings; indeed it may be safely affirmed that in this quality of forcible representation he is surpassed every day by a multitude of painters who have not the faintest chance of escaping permanent oblivion, yet Corot is a most famous artist. All his fame is due to success in one thing—he was able to express a certain feeling about nature which some lovers

WOOD AND LAKE

Painted by COROT

Reproduced in Photogravure by *DUJARDIN*

This Corot is useful as an illustration in different ways. It contains much of his sentiment and shows at the same time his peculiar treatment of trees and water. If the reader will refer to page 225 *he will find something about the care with which Corot avoided lake surfaces that were at all extensive. His way of interpreting foliage is analysed in the chapter on Trees in Art.*

of nature could understand. As it seemed to them pleasant and poetical, like a walk in the dewy fields at dawn on a summer morning, they were grateful for the gentle excitement and repaid Corot by declaring that he was a great artist. After this all criticism of Corot falls to the ground. It is a waste of industry to demonstrate that a man who has hit the bull's eye has not placed his arrow in this or that circle of the target. He preferred feeling to substance, and won his prize with that, sacrificing all else as being *for him* superfluous.

The question of Turner's success depended mainly on the reception of Turnerian sentiment—that sentiment which pervades his works and gives them the well-known Turnerian aspect. If he had failed to communicate that sentiment all his knowledge of hard fact, all his memory of effect, would not have availed to save his name from the dark fate of those who are not supposed to feel even when they feel most deeply. The Turnerian sentiment was, I should say, especially and peculiarly a delight in beautiful mystery. His success depended on finding a certain number of people to whom this sentiment could be communicated by his method of painting. As nothing moves common people to laughter more readily than a deep and sincere sentiment that they do not enter into, it naturally happened that the unsympathetic considered Turner's work ridiculous, and there is no reason to suppose that it would have appeared otherwise to the ancient Greeks, to the English and French of the middle ages, to the Japanese, or, in short, to any people who loved clearness only.

This leads us to the statement of a certainty and a probability with reference to the feelings that may be excited in us by the natural world. The certainty is, that at periods of history, which can be readily fixed upon, some of those states of feeling about landscape which are perfectly familiar to us were as yet totally unknown. The probability is, that in our own day we ourselves are totally ignorant of other states of feeling that will reveal themselves in the future, and that we are entirely unable to imagine what those states of feeling will be. But as it happens that artists are more advanced in the study of nature than the rest of us, they are likely to be nearer to the future than we are, and it may occasionally happen that the feeling expressed by an artist is of a kind that will become intelligible in a hundred years, but is not intelligible now. Meanwhile, the artist lives in obscurity and dies in poverty and neglect.

Even if the emotion felt by the artist is of a kind that the contemporary public understands, it is not certain that his art will convey it. Painting is hampered with technical difficulties, and it may happen that

the contest with these difficulties may so absorb the efforts of a painter as to chill and arrest the expression of his feelings. An author writes vigorously because he is allowed to scribble rapidly as soon as a paragraph has formed itself in his mind; but if he were compelled to form his letters like a writing-master, the molten current of thought and feeling would be congealed. So if a painter is consciously struggling to imitate natural forms, it is hardly possible for him, at the same time, to give expression to passionate feeling. The student-struggle for imitative skill must be over before the soul of the master can make its way through the clogging material pigments.

This may be the reason why some painters who are very lively and energetic men, sensitive to a great variety of natural beauties, produce works that are deficient in liveliness, energy, and variety.

There is still another cause of disappointment in art. The representation of a thing does not produce on the mind the same effect as the thing that is represented. A mountain seen in reality strikes the most indifferent as a huge mass, but it will not overawe the mind in a little picture. In the Salon of 1883 there was an enormous canvas by M. Renouf representing a boat rowed in a rough sea, and it produced a great effect on the public, which was partly due to the mere scale of the painting, since with the same artistic talent the painter could never have made a wave look so overwhelming on a small canvas. For the same reason a huge mountain should be painted on a gigantic canvas; but as there is not room for such things in private houses this is seldom done, and mountains are so reduced in scale as to lose all majesty, unless the spectator supplies it from his memory of real mountains and his knowledge of the true significance of those geological forms which are indicative of great dimensions. Painters try to overcome this difficulty by exaggeration of relative height and by making the lines steeper in degrees of slope, but a sound draughtsman dislikes exaggeration as being contrary to that perfection of drawing which he desires for its own sake, so that if a line has an inclination of sixty degrees he does not willingly make it vertical. It may, therefore, easily happen, and is likely to happen, that a truthful painter will seem tame and inadequate when a coarser and less observant artist will be more effective. There is, indeed, a certain sense in which it may be truly said that a close and loving observation of nature is an obstacle to success in art, for the greater our intimacy with the natural world the less are we disposed to sacrifice delicate knowledge and affectionate feeling to popular notions of what is powerful.

This is a boyish sketch (see date) of the head of Loch Awe, *drawn quite innocently in the belief that it was fairly true. It is given to show the incredible exaggeration to which enthusiasm, entirely devoid of science, so readily and naturally attains.*

A truthful drawing of the same mountains as the above, and essentially the same view, though not quite from the identical place. The reader will observe how much increase of knowledge diminishes grandeur of impression.

There is a place in Scotland, the head of Loch Awe, which has been celebrated for its sublimity ever since Burke wrote his essay on the 'Sublime and Beautiful.' It has been painted by a multitude of artists, and will, no doubt, continue to be a favourite sketching-ground so long as there are landscape-painters in Great Britain. It so happens that the head of Loch Awe is as familiar to me as some poem that I know by heart. During a part of my residence there I was endeavouring to draw mountain-forms, as nearly as might be, with strict accuracy, a profound mistake from the artistic point of view, but it had the advantage of opening my eyes, in a way that no other study could have done, to the real nature of popular landscape-painting. After the strict discipline of severe topographic drawing I went to the exhibitions and found invariably that in those representations of the scenery familiar to me which were sure of a ready sale there was scarcely an attempt at truthful drawing. The forms were not studied, but the arrangements of colour and effect were generally brilliant or pleasing, and it was the cleverness displayed in these that ensured the saleableness of the works. Besides this, I made the discovery, and a most perplexing discovery it was to me at that time, of the inadequateness of truthful drawing to convey the impression of sublimity which the natural scene suggested. The head of Loch Awe is, in nature, a scene of almost overwhelming grandeur. In a truthful drawing the grandeur disappears and nothing is left but some hill-forms that seem curiously well composed, but are not otherwise impressive. They do not even give the idea of any great elevation. Turner dealt with them in the most arbitrary fashion. He did not think that the mountains about Kilchurn were striking enough for his purpose, so he transported the Cladich view of Ben Cruachan to Kilchurn; but as in the Cladich view itself there was a long slope without any special interest, he made it shorter, steeper, and more broken. He also got rid, altogether, of a great mountain mass (Ben Vorich) to his right, which he seems to have considered unmanageable. Still there was far more grandeur in Turner's drawing than there could be in any faithful one, and therefore it may be said that he retained at least one truth which escaped from more faithful draughtsmen, since he retained sublimity.

This brings me to that point in all meditations upon landscape-painting where it becomes clear to every one who thinks boldly enough to face such problems, that the landscape-painter must look out for compensations to counterbalance the weakness of his art in conveying the emotions excited by nature. The experience of our predecessors

has made it clear that this can only be done by abandoning accurate drawing, because accuracy in drawing makes simple topography an ineluctable result,* and by substituting for it a complete liberty to alter and arrange materials in such fashion as to produce the strongest impression upon the mind. The artist who has accepted this necessity goes to nature for suggestion and materials, but copies nothing accurately. He looks upon the world of landscape as a poet or a novelist looks upon the human world, and no more copies a 'view' than a novelist reports a conversation. This leaves him free to use every means in his power for increasing the force of an impression. He discards everything that interferes with the intended poetical result, and exaggerates everything that can contribute to it. If he is skilful in these artifices he may possibly (it is by no means certain) arouse a glow of feeling in the public, enough to constitute what is called success, but to an artist with strong local affections there is something unsatisfactory in having to use so much craft and guile to paint a place *as it is not.*

I do not dwell upon the difficulty of imitating nature in landscape-painting. It is enough to say, in passing, that the landscape-painter is at an enormous disadvantage here because he is continually attempting the impossible. The splendour of natural landscape lies quite outside of his range of light, as everybody interested in the subject is aware.

On account of these various impediments there comes a time in the life of those who take a great delight in nature when they feel art to be so disappointing (especially in their own practice), that they are tempted to give up the pursuit and study of it, and enjoy nature alone without any reference to painting. The deliverance from art is then felt to be an emancipation. We go to mountain and lake, and feel like schoolboys released from school. Those highly artificial rules invented by artists and connoisseurs, which Byron so heartily detested, are violated by Nature at every turn, and with the very happiest results. She is constantly doing things that you and I would be severely blamed or pitilessly ridiculed for doing upon canvas, but still she goes on, heedless of all human opinion, and prodigal in her heterodox production. Indifferent to our indifference, equally careless of our enthusiastic praise, the sunlight and the earth or cloud forms together are eternally making new natural pictures of the most various aspect and character. Nature does this alike for heedless and admiring generations. Goldsmith looked

* No subtlety of criticism can wriggle itself out of this. An accurate drawing from nature *must* be a piece of topography.

upon the scenery of the Highlands as rather ridiculously hideous and dismal; to Scott the same scenery was a stimulus to the romantic imagination; for William Black it is a changeful vision of enchanted colouring that takes the mind outside of the common world into a dream-land of magical beauty. Nor were these men alone in their opinion. Each of them was the representative of the culture of his time. What Goldsmith expressed all the scholars of Queen Anne's day believed in their inmost minds. When Scott made the Highlands romantic a million readers all over the world were prepared to perceive romantic elements in scenery of that kind; and Black is simply the spokesman of a multitude of artists, amateurs, and people whose eyes have got somewhat accustomed to Highland colouring in the exhibitions, and so are prepared to be delighted with it in literature and reality. But throughout these different phases of opinion Nature herself remained absolutely the same. Her marvellous spectacles were presented to unnumbered generations before the faintest aesthetic interest in them arose. Even at the present day the delight in Highland colour is, I believe, almost exclusively an English or a Scottish sentiment. Frenchmen think it strange in nature, and wrong, unintelligible, or ridiculous in art.

After the first great disappointment caused by the discovery that truthful portraiture in landscape-painting does not convey the impression produced by the natural scene, there may come upon the mind a return to art with clearer views both of its true power and of its inevitable deficiency. We then admire the grandeur, freedom, and prodigious changefulness of nature; but have an affection for human art with less of admiration but more of sympathy. The power displayed by great artists, and even the mere cleverness exhibited by those who are only accomplished, must ever remain amongst the most astonishing results of human genius and skill; but there is something in art of a more intimate character, something that addresses itself especially to our sympathetic imagination, and it is by this rather than by any ostentatious conquest of technical difficulty that graphic representations of landscape retain their hold upon the mind. The kind of landscape represented may be of the humblest, so humble that we should scarcely notice it in nature, yet the choice of it, and the method of its treatment, may give it a fascinating significance. The ultimate cause of this I take to be the pleasure we have in following the emotions, or perceiving the preferences of another human being, especially when they are not too obviously set forth. We have a delicate pleasure in detecting sentiments that are somewhat obscure, as for example in music the tender and melancholy suggestiveness of

Chopin, makes us listen to him again and again with a somewhat tantalising yet delicious sense of mystery, when very direct music has no such fascination. Amongst pictures that represent human beings, there is, probably, not one in the whole world that has been so often looked upon in a spirit of profoundly interested, yet perplexed interrogation as that *Portrait d'Homme*, by Francia, in the Louvre; the quiet, sad seriousness of the countenance, the wistful gaze that we feel to be directed on no material object, the man's perfect forgetfulness both of himself and his surroundings, present us with a problem that must for ever remain obscure. His very name is lost; of the sorrows of his life nothing whatever is known to us. This only we know, that hundreds of years before we were born, this nameless Italian gentleman had been saddened by 'the malady of thought.' A painted landscape does not offer this interest so directly as a human face, but it may offer it indirectly. When we say that a landscape is melancholy, and it seems to draw us and hold us as by a spell, what we really feel is the melancholy of the artist who chose the subject and infused a poetic sadness into his interpretation. A lake and a wood are not melancholy in themselves; but how ineffably dreary they become in the hands of the poet who intentionally depresses us by every artifice of language, and then takes us to 'the dank tarn of Auber, in the ghoul-haunted woodland of Weir!' So, in painting, one of the most affecting landscapes I remember consisted exactly of these materials. It was by Daliphard, an artist who died before he had fully expressed himself, and who may possibly have been saddened by some foreboding. His picture represented a lonely pond, and a bit of rising woodland in a calm but dreary evening. That was all, but it was enough to make you pensive, and he called it '*Mélancolie.*' Even in this case, however, though the artist appears to have been successful in conveying the intended impression, the reader will observe that he did not entirely entrust his message to pictorial art, but called in the help of language, though only in a single word.*

To recapitulate what has been already advanced (before proceeding to another part of the subject) I should say that there is always an element of possible disappointment in graphic representations of landscape, for two chief reasons. The first is that depth and intensity of feeling, or other varieties of feeling, are not sure to get conveyed by means of painting to the spectator (not nearly so sure as in written description), and the

* Without the title most of the vulgar kind of spectators would have condemned the picture as uninteresting for want of subject. They would have liked it better with evidences of cheerful human life to the destruction of its sentiment.

second is that (to repeat words I have used already) although objects seen in nature may produce a most powerful impression, a truthful representation of the same objects may have scarcely any perceptible effect upon the mind. Beyond this we know that nature is unapproachable by art in effects of size and splendour, and yet, in spite of these risks of failure and deficiencies of resource, the fact still remains that landscape art may often succeed by winning sympathy, *especially if it is of an intimate character*, and that after we have clearly perceived the inadequacy of art to maintain any contest with nature we may come back to art with an affectionate interest in the human side of it. I find on looking back over my own experience of these matters, which now extends over more than thirty years, that the history of it may be briefly epitomised as follows:—First, there was a passionate but very confused love of both art and nature; then a predominant passion for nature with a disposition to sacrifice art to it entirely, making art wholly subordinate; finally (my present state) a clear perception that art and nature are far apart and must not be confounded; but this perception is accompanied by a discouraging sense of the entire uncertainty of art in its action upon mankind. In early life I believed that if work *was* truthful it would *appear* truthful, and I also believed that if the artist put deep feeling into his performance the presence of feeling must be visible to every one. I have no remnant of these beliefs at the present day. The effect of a work of art is aleatory. All that can be said is that anyone who cares at all seriously for landscape is likely to find, amongst the immense accumulations of existing art, some expression of knowledge that he can appreciate, some evidence of feeling in sympathy with his own.

It is time now to consider briefly in what degree the different means which the graphic arts place at our disposal may be available for the expression of human feeling about nature.

It so happens that I am writing this chapter by a window in an upper room from which there is an extensive view, and amongst the things on my table there is a small tray in *émail cloisonné*. A comparison of these may serve to make some elementary truths plain to us.

The natural scene is composed of fields, woods, and hills; and as it is a fine day there is a blue sky, with a few white clouds floating so slowly that I can only just detect their motion. The distant hills are extremely pale, but the nearer ones, being covered with wood, are dark relatively to the sky. The fields take different colours, according to the varieties of culture; and in the foreground there are some trees, principally fir, birch, and horse-chestnut, bright green where the sun strikes them and very dark

(the firs especially) in their shady hollows. As for the piece of enamel its elements are not altogether dissimilar from those of the landscape. The ground is pale blue, like a sky, and on it there are leaves and flowers, every leaf or petal carefully separated by its own little brazen wall, of which of course I only see the polished top, a line as of pale gold surrounding each patch of colour. The ribs of the leaves are represented by these little brazen walls.

As I glance from the enamelled tray to the natural scene I perceive that they have much in common. In both I see patches of colour on a dominant blue ground. There are, however, two essential points of difference. In nature all the patches of colour are gradated, whilst in the enamel there is no gradation; on the other hand, the enamel is divided by brazen lines, whilst in nature there are no lines. So we say that an *émail cloisonné* of this kind is conventional art, because a tacit agreement or convention between the workman and the spectator has permitted the use of ungradated colours and linear divisions, both parties knowing that these devices are at the same time convenient and unnatural.

I now turn my little tray upside down, and I find that the workman has enamelled the bottom of it also, but as it was not likely to be often seen he has done it all in one colour, sky-blue, yet there are *cloisons*, or brazen walls, in this, producing the effect of flourishes drawn in golden lines upon a sky-blue ground. Here, then, the linear drawing is not used to assist definition by separating patches of colour, but it gives a definition by itself.

If the brazen walls could be removed from the upper side of the tray the patches of colour would still explain the nature of the flowers and leaves represented against their ground of sky. If, on the contrary, the enamel were melted away and the *cloisons* preserved, we should know by the drawing of these outlines that flowers and leaves had been intended, and we should know all about their shapes. The first would approximately represent a painting (minus gradation), the second would be an outline drawing.

Still there would be something absent in either case. An enamel of this kind has lights and darks, one patch being lighter or darker than another, but it has no light and shade.

If I tried to make a study of what is visible through my window in oil or water-colour I could manage, more or less clumsily, to give some notion of natural colour and natural light and shade at the same time, and there would be no lines in my work. This would be like the enamel without *cloisons,* but better. If, on the contrary, I took pen and ink and drew

lines and shades, that would be like the *cloisons* without the enamel, but superior in being shaded.

Now the question, in dealing with natural landscape by means of the fine arts, always reduces itself to this: What qualities of nature do we want to suggest to the mind?

Painting either imitates or suggests the entire synthesis of natural appearances. At first this seems such a decided advantage that there can be no hesitation in preferring painting to every other graphic art for the rendering of landscape, but there is this great objection to painting that it is indiscreet, it affirms too much, it does not allow of sufficient reticence. In literature I may go just so far in assertion as my knowledge goes, or I may give as much of my knowledge as I choose, and withhold the rest; in painting I must tell more, and either display my ignorance or affirm positively what I would rather have left vague. The slighter graphic arts have, therefore, a real advantage over painting in this respect; they are not simply inferior, as is often believed; their inferiority is compensated by a real gain. In words I may say, 'The lake was calm, the mountains rose pale in the distance, the clouds hung motionless in the sky.' I take up a palette and cannot affirm this (which of itself is all that is wanted to convey the idea of repose in nature) without making other affirmations utterly superfluous for the mental impression. I must say what was the shape and colour of the mountains, what season of the year it was, what species of cloud hung in the air, and I must combine all these affirmations with such a scheme of composition and light-and-shade as may prevent critics from falling down upon me, whilst expressing myself with such manual dexterity as may save me from the contempt of artists.

Now we see how the mental freedom of the designer gains when he takes up a simpler art, and gains precisely because the art is less complete, less comprehensively affirmative. Try to say in charcoal drawing—'The lake was calm, the mountains rose pale in the distance, the clouds hung motionless in the sky.' This can be fully expressed without going very much further than the words. There are no hues in charcoal, nothing but values,* an immense deliverance, and charcoal permits a certain vagueness in the forms.

Next, let us suppose the statement to be, 'The Castle of Crussol stands upon a rocky height by the Rhone opposite Valence.' I could make this statement quite truly in words without having seen the castle, but if I

* Most readers will be aware that the French expression *les valeurs* means the degree of lightness or darkness that colours possess independently of their hues. It is most desirable that this term should be generally adopted in English for the sake of brevity.

drew it I should have to draw Crussol and no other castle, because all the graphic arts require so much definition that it is impossible to escape it. Still in the above statement there is nothing about colour, so I may avoid painting, nor is there anything about light-and-shade, so I may leave charcoal aside and make an outline with a pencil or an etching-needle.

I have said that painting is indiscreet, that it often refuses the liberty of reticence when the artist might desire it. Let me show another form of this indiscretion, this compelling to say more than is always necessary or desirable. If you look over a sketch-book by any clever landscape-painter you will find many a page in which only the most interesting part of the subject is drawn with any completeness, the rest being slightly indicated. That is quite the most rational action of the human mind with reference to what attracts its attention. The Castle of Crussol interests me; I sketch the ruin with some care and that part of the precipice which is interesting, the rest I indicate loosely in a few minutes with the pencil point. There is no available foreground in the natural scene, so I leave it out, and my castled rock is suspended in the air, but that is of no consequence. In painting what a difference of exigency in the art itself! I may not vignette the subject on canvas; it must be filled out to all the four corners, even though nature may have provided nothing to furnish them, so I must go elsewhere to get materials and fill up my vacant places, even at the cost of all local fidelity. Hence it follows that the art of pencil-sketching, which at first sight seems so very inferior to painting, is really superior to it for topographic work, because it allows parts to be treated slightly and vacant spaces to be left without offence. The art of the pencil sketcher does, in fact, answer much more closely to the action of the mind in conversation and in literature, where we dwell only on what we consider to be interesting and pass over the rest as lightly and rapidly as we can.

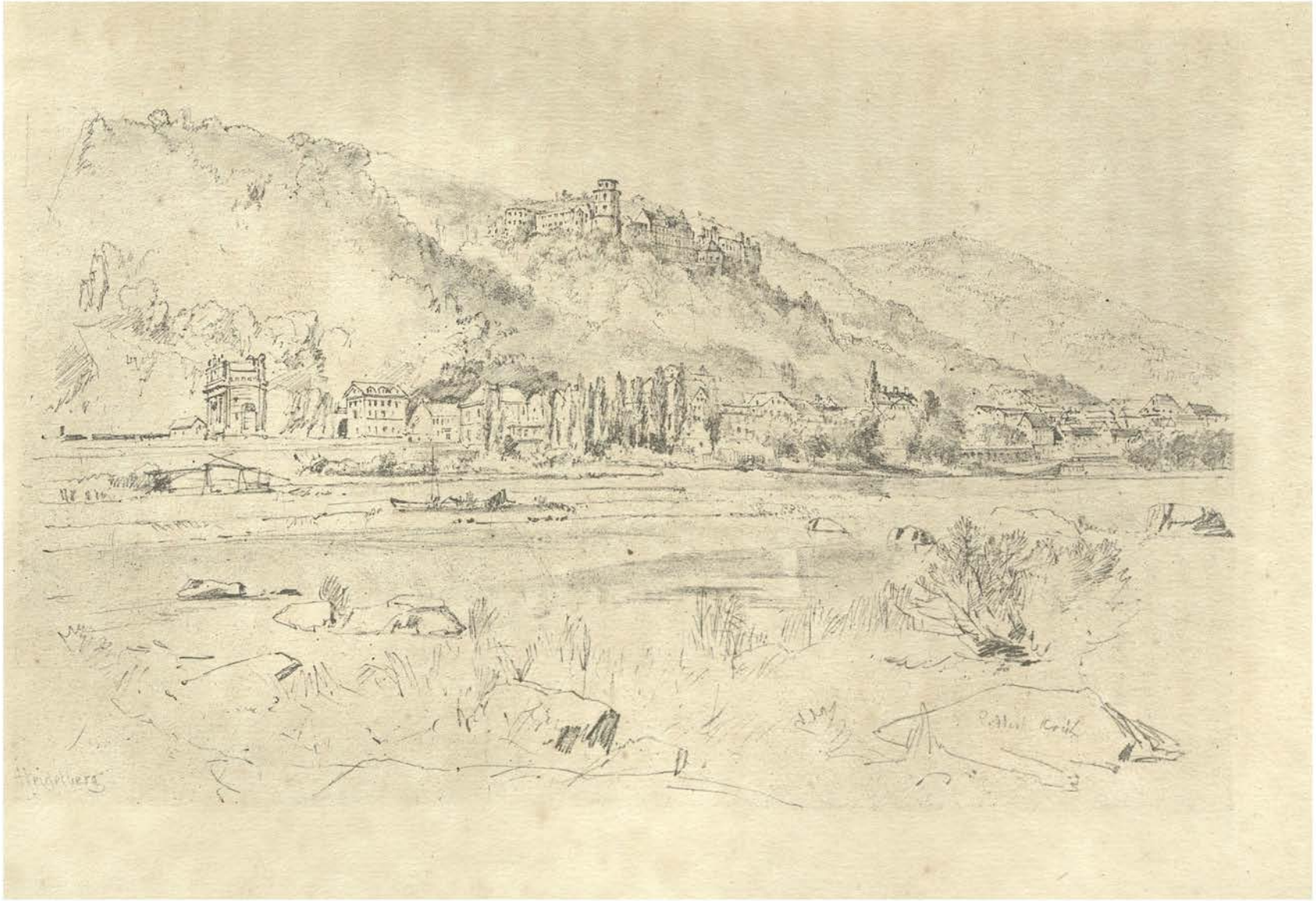
It may, however, not unfrequently happen that colour is absolutely essential to express that quality in a landscape which most affects us, and when this is the case it is hopeless to try experiments in any kind of monochrome. The wonderful evening effects in northern mountainous countries, when the distances pass into intense purple and deep azure against a line of strong yellow in the sky, when the greens of the near trees and fields grow deeper and richer as the twilight advances and the grey clouds that veil the upper heaven seem placed there only to catch on their billows the farthest reverberations of the afterglow—such effects as these have a power on the mind as much dependent upon colouring

HEIDELBERG CASTLE

Pencil Drawing by R. KENT THOMAS

Reproduced in Photogravure by *DUJARDIN*

Mr. Thomas was a landscape draughtsman of quite exceptional fidelity, who rarely had recourse to the common artifices of arrangement and opposition. After his lamented death I was permitted to see some of his sketch-books, and found much to interest me, with absolute proof of his truthful way of seeing things in his sketches of scenes well known to me. He was an excellent representative of the class of artists who, without imaginative invention, see clearly, and interpret rapidly and skilfully, what they see. This sketch was done simply for the artist himself, as a private memorandum. Mr. Thomas was most skilful with the etching-needle, and left many plates of excellent quality in their kind.



as the flowers in a tropical forest or the plumage of its birds. Nay, more, the very transience of these evening splendours gives them a pathetic charm. We know that they will not last longer than some rich but melancholy strain in music, and that they will never be played over again exactly, so long as the world endures. Are such glories to be painted in dull brown monochrome with nothing but earth and oil? Let them be painted, rather, with jewels or coloured flames! What painter is to translate into monochrome that poem of Uhland's which Longfellow rendered thus?—

'Hast thou seen that lordly castle,
That castle by the sea?
Golden and red above it
The clouds float gorgeously.

'And fain it would stoop downward
To the mirrored wave below;
And fain it would soar upward
In the evening's crimson glow.'

The value of colour in landscape art is one of the most complicated questions known to criticism. Strong local colour may be an interference of a most inconvenient kind by attracting attention to itself, to the detriment of the unity of the scene, as in masses of brightly coloured flowers or coloured strata of rock. It may even happen that the colouring is in contradiction to what would otherwise be the dominant sentiment of the scene, for colour often appears to be purely accidental and to be due to circumstances that have no connexion whatever with the unity of impression that we desire to receive from nature. It may be due to the simple fact that certain spots are favourable to certain vegetable growths, or it may be due to the agricultural enterprise of man. Important patches of colour may be the result of a dangerous industrial activity. I know a region where there is a tile manufactory of a most advanced and scientific kind, and the directors and workmen are so terribly clever that they can produce glazed tiles of all colours, so that the roofs in the neighbourhood are beginning to display polychromatic horrors of a dazzling and, I fear, a permanent brightness, one house especially enjoying a roof of a blue so brilliant that the sky must look down upon it with jealousy. Thus it happens that patches of colour, both in nature and in human work, may be most inconveniently obtrusive. In the real scene there is no getting rid of them, and many an otherwise beautiful place is spoiled by them, but in art they may be got rid of in two ways. A picture that looks as if it had been painted in full colour may nevertheless quietly ignore every piece

of natural colour that is inconvenient, and substitute something more easily harmonised with the rest. This is continually, and quite rightly, done by artists, especially by those who have a cultivated taste in colour. I hope there is not a landscape-painter living who would hesitate about substituting something quieter for a field of rape in flower.

The surest way of getting rid of chromatic impertinences is, however, the use of monochrome, of which the best forms are sepia, Indian ink, or charcoal for tones and pen-drawing or etching for lines, whilst pencil gives both, but in a minor degree, its lines not being quite so sharp as those of the needle, nor its tones so deep as those of sepia, or Indian ink. These processes are all absolutely satisfactory within their own limits, and are not likely even to be superseded. Oil monochrome is not so acceptable as any of these, because if pigments are used as glazes only, that is, transparently, they look too thin and lack the crispness and decision of water-colour, whilst if made opaque by mixture with white they acquire contradictory chromatic qualities* and become disagreeable. Hence the result that, although oil monochrome may be resorted to for photographic reproduction, it is not liked by artists for itself. There is no such objection to sepia used with water, nor to charcoal, nor to etching, and these three processes are accepted by all artists as sound in their several ways.

I repeat this here, in a succinct fashion, to spare the reader the trouble of referring to *The Graphic Arts*, though I desire, as far as may be, to exclude technical matters from the present volume. I may now proceed to consider some points, not hitherto dealt with, in the relation between the monochromatic graphic arts and nature.

We have seen that monochrome has the advantage of getting completely rid of distracting and impertinent colour. It has also this farther advantage, that whilst in painting light has often to be very much lowered in order that colour may be preserved, monochrome is free from that necessity. A red sky cannot be painted without darkening the whole subject excessively to give it some relative brightness, but the same sky may be kept much brighter in a sepia drawing, and, therefore, a more extended scale of values may be preserved. It is not necessary for his intellectual purpose that the artist should trouble himself to discriminate between delicate tones at the high or treble end of the scale, he can easily

* What I mean is that if you make a scale of tints, say with burnt umber and flake white, the more white you mix with your umber the farther will the mixture get away from the chromatic quality of umber, quite independently of lightness. This divergence does not occur when umber is diluted with oil.

lose them all in white, leaving simple blank paper, without incurring any blame for doing so; and by this means his work is not only simplified but even made luminous, and he gains more space for his middle tints. He may also lose many of the lowest notes in black, which would be impossible if he used colour. Besides this, all imaginable degrees of sketchiness are permitted in the black-and-white arts, because the paper itself may be left to play a part, whilst in painting the canvas is always covered.

I think it is clear, then, that the arts of monochrome allow of more freedom in the expression of the mind than painting does, and, therefore, that they are more likely to suit intellectual men, except only in those cases where colour itself is essential to the expression of thought, from its close connexion with the central motive or idea. This may explain the following short paragraph in the *Life of Samuel Palmer*, which must have been a surprise to many readers:—

'For some years after his removal to Red Hill, Samuel Palmer had been obliged to abandon etching, through pressure of water-colour commissions, though with great reluctance, *as it was an art he far preferred to painting, which he would, if possible, have wholly given up in favour of the needle.*'

This is simply evidence that the intellectual and imaginative faculties were stronger in Palmer than the sensuous delight in colour, a view of his nature that is still further borne out by his extreme interest in literature, an interest perhaps exceeding, on the whole, that which he felt in the graphic arts. 'If I love any secular thing,' he wrote to me in 1871, 'better than art, it is literature. Would that even now I might serve a late apprenticeship to it! Surely the direction of a line, or the gradation of a colour, are not more interesting than the structure of a paragraph. . . . To be engaged for years in writing books is my ideal of secular bliss: for a yet higher kind I fear we must turn away from the intellectual hemisphere altogether.'

It seems to follow from this that art in monochrome, which usually accompanies literature in illustrated books, is by its nature better adapted for association with literature (the most thoughtful of all the arts) than coloured illustration, whilst, on the other hand, the more sensuous art of painting is better adapted for the walls of rich men's houses, where it is associated with rich hangings, beautifully coloured carpets, polished woods or marbles, and other things agreeable to the eye.

As for the closeness of the connexion with nature it might indeed be argued that painting is, of all the graphic arts, the most closely related to the natural world, but it so happens that artistic necessities are continually

compelling painters to deviate from nature, so that the connection is not so close as it appears, at first sight, to the inexperienced. There can be no doubt whatever that of all the arts oil-painting is the one which, on the whole, can come the nearest to an imitation of a natural landscape, but this closeness has seldom been seen except in studies executed with rare singleness of intention, having truth, and truth alone, for their object. So soon as the desire is to make a picture and not a study the artist no longer makes his canvas a faithful mirror of the natural world, and he is not likely to give toilsome pains to the attainment of this extreme and trustworthy fidelity when he has experienced its consequences, and felt what it is to be treated as a crude experimentalist beyond the pale of the fine arts. The few who have devoted themselves to painting landscape as it is have generally been told that they were ignorant of art, or that their subjects were badly chosen. The same subjects, in the hands of artists too prudent to be truthful, have supplied material for popular pictures.

I have said nothing about executive difficulty, preferring to suppose that all these arts have been equally mastered. It may, however, be noted that what artists call the *quality* of natural objects is but rarely rendered in its perfection, and that an art which evidently renounces all striving for it (such as linear drawing or etching) is often less disappointing than one which, like oil-painting, is almost compelled to aim at quality, unless it is decidedly abstract, like the landscape backgrounds in mural works by Puvis de Chavannes. It is well known to painters of the figure that the quality of flesh and hair is seldom attained in such perfection as to give delight, and the same difficulty presents itself in landscape in an equal degree, for nothing can be more difficult to render than the nature of clouds, which may seem solid without substance, and translucent without transparency.

CHAPTER XIV.

The Scenery of Great Britain.

IN the distribution of beauty over the surface of the world our own island may be congratulated on having received a pleasant and most acceptable, though not a brilliant, share. Great Britain contains within itself suggestions enough to make almost any kind of landscape intelligible to a Briton who knows his native island; but it does not contain specimens of the greatest natural magnificence. It has been sometimes asserted that we do not even possess a mountain, and that our lakes are mere bog-tarns, unworthy to be mentioned with those of Switzerland and Italy. If the word 'mountain' is to be limited by application to those which pass the line of eternal snow, and have glaciers, and rise into sharp, high peaks and needles of almost inaccessible naked rock, then of course it is plain that Ben Nevis is not a mountain; but if a certain grandeur of mass and sublimity, of crest and precipice, is enough to make a hill worthy of the higher title, then Ben Cruachan unquestionably deserves it. The word 'mountain' came into our language from the old French *montaigne*, derived from the Latin *mons;* and neither the old nor the modern French nor the ancient Romans themselves, nor the modern Italians, nor any other of the Latin races, have ever used the word in the narrowly restricted sense which some Englishmen have endeavoured to attach to it. This, indeed, is sometimes observed by the English themselves, but with the inversion that comes of patriotism; for when a Frenchman uses 'montagne,' in its correct old sense, of any considerable hill, they laugh at him for his inaccuracy in the use of language. It is, no doubt, desirable that we should have words to distinguish one thing from another, but it may be considered sufficient to call mountains of the first class 'Alps,' and those of the second-class (like our Scotch Bens) simply 'mountains,' whilst those elevations which do not attain any grandeur of peak or precipice (such as Pendle Hill, for example) may be classed together broadly as 'hills.' Accepting, then, this rough general classification for its convenience, I may say that Great Britain has some mountains of which the sublimity is out of all proportion to the measurable altitude; this sublimity is greatly enhanced by the harshness of the climate in North Britain, which does not permit the growth of trees above a

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very moderate height, and so gives an aspect of desolation to the upper regions which would be lost under a more genial sun. Again, although the mountains of Scotland are not Alps, since they do not rise above the limit of eternal snow, they are far enough to the north to have snow upon their summits both late and early in the year, and by this also they gain an apparent grandeur beyond their rank in physical geography. The magnificence of the scenery in the Highlands of Scotland, especially to the west, is so much increased by the extraordinary brilliance, richness, depth, and variety of the colouring, and by the startling suddenness and strength of the effects, that it far surpasses in artistic interest much Continental scenery that is on a larger scale. It is, therefore, not by any means a mere delusion of patriotism in the inhabitants of Great Britain to hold the northern part of the island in high esteem as a region of landscape refreshment for the eye, whilst it is at the same time good for hardy bodily exercise.

A word may now be said in defence of the lakes. They are, it is true, generally upon a small scale, but that very smallness allows the existence of many within a limited extent of territory; and there are certain reasons, to be developed at length in another part of this volume, why it is not desirable, in the interest of their own beauty, that lakes should be too large. Some of the lakes in Great Britain are remarkable for the beauty of their islands (I need only mention Windermere, Derwentwater, Loch Lomond, and Loch Awe), and so are some Irish lakes, whilst those of Switzerland (almost without exception) are destitute of this great element of interest and charm. The salt-water lochs of Scotland are not so imposing in their scenery as the Norwegian fiords, but they give some idea of them—just as Ben Cruachan in winter gives an idea of the Alps: and the Scottish sea-lochs have often a character of their own—not so charming as the richer landscape of Loch Katrine, but more desolate and melancholy.

In the most striking contrast with the scenery of North Britain, which repeats in a minor degree some characteristics of Norway and Switzerland, that of eastern England closely resembles Dutch scenery, which many excellent artists have held to be worth painting, though its qualities are not often much appreciated by the lovers of grander nature. More will be said of these qualities in a subsequent chapter; for the present, it is enough to note the remarkable fact (little appreciated until the novel passion for romantic scenery had spent itself), that in so small an island as Great Britain we should possess our own Norway and our own Holland. The difference even in climate between Norfolk and Argyllshire is as

LANDSCAPE with Hill and Cloud

By T. GIRTIN

Engraved in Mezzotint by *S. W. REYNOLDS*

One of Girtin's solemn landscapes of northern hill scenery. I am not quite certain about the subject, but a correspondent believes the scene to be near Edinburgh, and that the peculiar hill with the precipice is Arthur's Seat. However this may be, the drawing is a noble one. What I like particularly in Girtin is his fine independence of the foolish rules and devices invented by artists without feeling. Any common trickster would have told him that this foreground was dull, and ought to be enlivened with figures or a cottage with a tree cutting sharply in light against the hill. It is a thousand times better as it is.

great as if the countries lay very far apart, whilst in the character of the landscape the opposition is as complete as possible.

The general characteristics of the English Midlands (so beloved by George Eliot) are a homely and cheerful peacefulness associated with a great agricultural perfection. The Midland counties seldom offer much that is interesting in landscape, though they are well adapted to that healthy condition of the human mind in which, having subdued nature to its own purposes, it is free to act without being too much distracted by natural difficulties or grandeurs. The landscape of the Midland counties is favourable to man as a home, but does not offer anything to attract him as a traveller in search of excitement. Those who pass through it as they approach the capital from the north may admire its fertility, and acknowledge its importance for the breeding of fine animals and strong Englishmen; but it must seem to them to have lost the masculine expression of their own ruder and less favoured land. In the south of England the scenery becomes more interesting again. Notwithstanding their general want of elevation, the hills are energetic in form, on a small scale, and the vales are often rich in foliage and farm scenery to a degree unknown in the north. The country of Linnell, of Samuel Palmer, and other pastoral landscape-painters, must have excellent artistic elements.

On the west side of England the beauty of landscape culminates in the Lake District, then dies away by a gradual decline to the region about Liverpool, to resume its energy in North Wales. There is then a second decline—not from beauty to ugliness, but rather from energy to comparative repose, and the landscape energy is recovered to the south of the Bristol Channel, in the highlands of Devonshire, which are not without many characteristics of the north—pure streams flowing over granite, and a high heathery region that would remind us of Scotland, if there were the same bold mountain forms, and the same deep lakes in the valleys.

River scenery is not the strong point of landscape in any island, as a great river has not space to develop itself; and yet England has her Thames, which for variety of character and a certain park-like richness in some portions of its course is without a rival on the Continent. From Oxford to London, beauty; from London to the sea, the grandeur of the stateliest waterway in the world, laden with the merchandise of the greatest maritime empire! And besides this grandeur, and that of the western estuary, how much beauty in a hundred streams, some of them made famous, like the Tamar and Wharfe, by painters; others immor-

talised, like Tweed, and Doon, and Yarrow, in verse that will live for ever! The mere names of them are enough to produce an inexpressible emotion when one thinks of them in a foreign land; and even the rivers that nobody has ever heard of have their own special friends—the quiet angler, the humble painter or poet, not more notorious than the streams they visit with a secret and tender affection.

I have not mentioned the archipelago in the north-west, full of interest, and possessing every kind of beauty except that of a rich southern vegetation. Exposed as it is to the storms of the Atlantic in a latitude too far north for any soft luxuriance of sylvan beauty, it still offers in the long days of the northern summer a region for yachting second only in interest to the isles of Greece, a region where it is possible, without any painful effort of the imagination, to realise the wanderings of Odysseus. Farther still to the north we have groups of islands that suggest other associations, belonging rather to Scandinavia. Bleak lands and lofty grey precipices, with stormy seas and rushing tides are the dreary but sublime characteristics of Ultima Thule.

The advantages of Great Britain from our present point of view are chiefly these: first, that within a moderate extent of country are to be found many varieties of landscape, secondly, that these varieties are often so suggestive of other lands that they enable us to imagine them with little effort; and lastly, that the climate itself affords almost as much variety as the landscape, so that in the course of a single year an Englishman may sometimes fancy himself in France, and sometimes far to the north. The disadvantages of the country are, first, that nothing is ever to be seen on a large scale, except the Atlantic Ocean, whilst human industry in many parts of the island has entirely destroyed the natural character of the landscape, and even the purity of the sky, so that the inhabitants live in a sort of artificial limbo of perpetual ugliness and gloom. Nor is this the only evil effect of industry, for if manufactures ruin landscape altogether, scientific agriculture too completely effaces the natural roughness of the land, leaving no wildness to please the eye that hungers for the liberty of nature. These two forms of destruction by industry have spoilt a great part of England, and the process is extending daily, so that the number of English people who are exiled by their own surroundings from a sight of unspoilt nature, even of the humblest kind, is continually and painfully on the increase. These things have been said before by writers who live in the midst of the lamentable change, but to one who comes occasionally on the accumulated effects of it the result is still more striking; and

TOTNES

Water-colour Drawing by J. M. W. TURNER, R.A.

Etched by *A. BRUNET DEBAINES*

This belongs to a class of subjects at the same time very English, and very much to Turner's taste. He loved Devonshire with its rivers and harbours. Totnes, which is at the upper end of the Dartmouth estuary, is at the same time easily accessible from the sea and sufficiently far inland to be removed from the bleakness, and sheltered from the storms of the exposed coast. The crown of ruined, battlemented wall would be a great attraction to Turner.

when I reflect on the destruction of landscape that has been accomplished in my own lifetime I am forced to the conclusion that the English people of the future will either have to content themselves with painted canvases for landscapes, or undertake a long railway journey for every glimpse of pure and genuine nature, at least upon the land.

It is one of the great advantages of living upon an island that the majority of its inhabitants are never very far from the sea, which is always sure to be perfectly natural, as men have no power to spoil it. The shore, too, is likely to remain natural for the greater part of its extent, so that the line of coast affords an opportunity of seeing natural forces as they act independently of human interference.

The exercise of a little imagination, aided by the discoveries of modern geological science, adds immensely to the grandeur of British scenery in our mental conception of it, for although there is not a single glacier in the kingdom, we have now the certainty that immense glaciers have existed in the past and that they have left traces of their powerful passage on rocks that we know familiarly. In writing this I recall to memory with the utmost distinctness the glacier-polished rocks of Loch Awe.* The sublimity that such a lake-basin gains from its past history is almost enough to compensate for the absence of glaciers in the present; and when we remember the extreme antiquity of the British mountains and the fact that they are the reduced representatives of loftier peaks that existed at a time inconceivable by us, and think of the slow action of the agencies that wore them down, we find in the geological history of our land a grandeur which, though unconnected with the presence of man, was a magnificent preparation for his coming.

* 'One cannot but wonder when, on ascending the valley from Kilmartin, he at last finds himself on an ice-worn barrier of schist, and sees stretched out for miles before him the wooded shores of Loch Awe. The lake is dammed back by hard rock, yet the smoothed and polished surface of the barrier and the parallelism of its striations with the length of the valley, show that the mass of ice which once filled up the present basin of the lake passed on down the continuation of the valley towards Kilmartin. And all along the sides of the loch, and on its rocky islets, the same traces may be seen of the steady southward march of the ice. The rocks are worn into smooth, mammillated outlines, and covered with ruts and grooves that trend with the length of the valley. It is, in short, a rock-basin of which all that can be seen is ice-worn; and if further proof of the old glaciers were needed it would be found in the heaps of moraine rubbish piled along the side of the valley.'—*The Scenery of Scotland*, by Archibald Geikie.

CHAPTER XV.

The Scenery of France.

I GIVE a separate chapter to the scenery of France for several different reasons. It is interesting to us as that of the nearest Continental country, often visited or crossed by English people who go abroad; it is useful, being a part of the Continent, to make us understand some of the peculiarities of our own island by the valuable contrast and standard of comparison which it affords; and it happens to be very familiar to the writer of this volume.

The first important difference between English and French scenery is that French scenery is on a much larger scale. This has nothing to do with the extent of the country as a political division of Europe. It is true that the area of France much exceeds that of Great Britain,* but the scenery of a very large country may be on a small scale. Holland is an example of a small country with large scenery, because it is part of a great plain.

It would not be accurate to describe French scenery as being entirely on a large scale. A tourist who explores will find in some parts of France scenery as small in scale as that of Surrey or Derbyshire, but the truth remains that some of the features in France are large features. Its plains are of great extent, its mountains are very lofty, and its rivers broad at a distance from the sea, and so long that on the Loire you may make a boat voyage exceeding the length of England, and on the Seine, or the Saône and Rhone, other voyages longer than Scotland or Ireland. As to the scale of the mountains, Mr. Whymper tells us that 'there are more than twenty peaks exceeding twelve thousand feet and thirty others exceeding eleven thousand feet, within the district bounded by the rivers Romanche, Drac, and Durance.' Now if the reader will take the trouble to consult a good map of France he will be surprised to see in how small a space, comparatively to the whole country, those fifty peaks are congregated, yet the lowest of them is more than three times the height of Helvellyn; and if, after that, he will extend his survey to the other mountainous parts of France, taking some note of the number of mountains that exceed the altitude of Ben Cruachan and Ben Lomond, he will

* France is (roughly speaking) about three times the size of Great Britain.

be in little danger of believing that French scenery is always tame. There is, for example, the department of the Ardèche, on the right bank of the Rhone, which is but little visited by tourists, and does not contain a single mountain whose name is known in England. It is natural that the hills of the Ardèche should be little known as the fame of them is extinguished by the Alps, yet they are highly picturesque and full of geological interest. As to their altitudes they are not considered high mountains in France, but there are twelve of them that excel Ben Nevis.* The total extent of the mountainous parts of France is estimated by Reclus at twenty-four or twenty-five millions of hectares, which exceeds the surface of Great Britain. The ground covered by the European Alps, including those of France, Italy, Switzerland, and Austria, is estimated at the same area. Notwithstanding all this geographical evidence it is quite common to meet with English tourists who judge of French scenery in general by that which they see between Boulogne and Paris. 'French scenery' for them means an interminable plain with occasional undulations, and straight lines of poplars along a lazy river or a stagnant canal. And they do not appreciate even the lowland scenery at its value. They do not care for the frequent elegance of its forms, the delicacy of its colouring, or the innumerable pictorial suggestions which it contains.

The plain, no doubt, has an important place in the scenery of France. In the great French plains three Irelands might find a lodging, and it is easy to feel in the midst of one of these as if there could be no mountains anywhere, so dominant is the influence and sentiment of the plain, which even the very sky reflects, for the sky of a low country has, like the land, a character of its own. It is a common English belief that there are no hedges in France. The truth is that in some parts of France, of considerable extent, hedges are as numerous as in England. I know many a French estate that is so divided. Still, it is also true that there are vast spaces of French lowland without any such division; and it is hard to imagine the natural grandeur of lowland scenery unless it is seen without hedges. They make a farm more snug and comfort-

* Some readers may be interested to learn the names of these twelve and their altitudes, so I append them. The heights are in English feet:—

Mézenc, 5753; *Gerbier de Joncs*, 5087; *Roche D'Astet*, 5087; *Sépoux*, 5031; *Mont de la Croix de Bauzon*, 5051; *Tanargue*, 4982; *Mont Cros*, 4949; *Rocher d'Abraham*, 4923; *Suc de Bauzon*, 4832; *Bois de Montsezieu*, 4792; *Suc de l'Areilladou*, 4644; *Suc de Montivernoux*, 4732.

The height of Ben Nevis is 4368 feet. I may add that the low ground of the department of the Ardèche is not of any great elevation. Its lowest water level is about 130 feet above the sea. As you go down the Rhone you pass the Mont Pilat, near Condrieu, which is 4700 feet high, and the Mont Ventoux, near Avignon, which is more than 6200.

able, but they destroy a prospect. There is, however, another evil in agriculture that does great harm in France, at least from the artistic point of view. In some parts of the country the small properties, though not divided by hedges, lie in long strips or bands of different cultures that extend like pieces of narrow cloth along the ground, and when the contrast between them happens to be glaring, as it often is, the result is a party-coloured appearance, which few artists would feel to be desirable, and which has nothing to do with nature. The habit of making straight roads and of planting those long lines of poplars that Englishmen so generally detest, increases the feeling of weariness that one often receives from a French plain, but even the poplars themselves, though so obviously arranged in that way by human interference, have a certain grandeur, like armies, especially when their innumerable crests rise against a lurid evening sky or sway gently in the river-breeze at dawn.

The culture of the vine, according to French methods, has not been favourable to landscape, since whenever the exposure is good for the grape, and the soil propitious, vineyards have been planted upon the steepest slopes which have been so striped with narrow terraces that their natural grandeur has suffered some injury in consequence. This is especially noticeable on the precipitous western shore of the Rhone, between Valence and Vienne. Had those lofty banks been left without terracing, and planted with almost any kind of trees that could flourish there, the effect would have been much more beautiful. In many places the artificial terraces are so numerous, and the little flat strips of earth have to be supported on such high walls, that we see more of wall than of anything else. Besides this objection the French system of viticulture, even when there are no terraces, diminishes the beauty of the scenery. The vine, according to this system, is not a luxuriant but a low plant, with a short rough stick to compensate for the weakness of its stalk. When there are no leaves you see these sticks by millions, and when the leaves are abundant you have an expanse of green that has often been not unjustly compared to a boundless field of currant-bushes. There is, however, a certain time of the year when the vine really adds to the beauty of the slopes of the Côte-d'Or and the Rhone. This is in the late autumn when the leaves take the most gorgeous colouring, and you have miles of purple and gold and scarlet with fragments of green remaining still strangely fresh amongst them, the colour of the whole often sublimated to an ideal glory by the magical state of the atmosphere giving distances of almost unearthly delicacy, and the loveliest transitions

from their wonderful aërial azure and greys to the golden splendour of the foreground.

Trees have a less important effect on the general aspect of French scenery than might be expected from the known quantity of them. There are great forests, which indeed are necessary for the supply of fuel in a country where coal is little used for domestic purposes and where charcoal is almost always employed for cooking; but the general impression received by travellers is that wood is rarer than it is in England—rarer and of inferior size. There are in France large tracts of remarkable nudity and aridity, especially in the south; there are also other regions in which wood is very plentiful, but generally congregated into forests, the great extent of which is hardly to be realised by seeing them at a distance and you cannot see much of a forest if it is near.* With regard to the size of the trees I know of nothing comparable for sylvan magnificence on a large scale to the wonderful Forest of Fontainebleau; but I have met with many fine trees elsewhere in France, though they are only found in certain districts, often out of the tourist's way, and the number of them is said to be steadily diminishing. The common French woods are cut every twenty years, in sections; but there are groups of trees left accidentally that escape this treatment, and the avenues about the country towns, and in some private domains, are preserved until they perish from decay.

The magnificence of French rivers is paid for by an almost total absence of lakes, which is the more to be regretted that in a country where the mountains are so numerous, so lofty, and often of such noble form, the lakes might have been expected to possess a character of great sublimity. It is difficult to examine the map from Lons-le-Saulmier to Draguignan without thinking with some regret what a magnificent lake district that region would have made had it only been provided with lake basins. There is water in abundance from the torrents, there are valleys to make the most beautiful inlets, there is in short everything except that hollowing of the rock into depressions with a rim to retain water which is indispensable to the formation of a lake. In this respect Scotland is incomparably superior to France, though the country is so much smaller and its mountains so inferior, not only in altitude but also in grandeur of form. It is, however, inaccurate to say that there are absolutely no lakes in France. There are a few small ones comparable to the smaller English meres (the pretty lake of Nantua is an example)

* The only way to realise the extent of the forests in France is to consult the Ordnance maps.

and since the annexation of Savoy there are the beautiful lakes of Annecy and Bourget* that may rank with Coniston and Ullswater. Besides this it may be remembered that Lake Leman has a French shore. Of sea inlets France has nothing to compare with Norwegian fiords or Scottish salt-water lochs; but she is not absolutely destitute of these either, having the *Étang de Berre* and the *Lac de Valcarres*.† Of these, I have only seen the *Étang de Berre*, a very fine salt lake, with a narrow outlet to the Mediterranean, and otherwise entirely enclosed by hilly shores high enough to give a certain interest to the distances, but not high enough for sublimity. The lake is of the size the most favourable to effects of distance on water, for a narrower area seems in very clear weather as if you could row across it in a few minutes, and a broader area becomes so marine that the lacustrine character is lost. The *Étang de Berre* might be described as the finest of ponds or the most perfect of miniature seas. It is impossible to imagine anything better adapted for boating, as the waters are completely protected against the swell of the Mediterranean when the south wind drives the breakers against the rocky coast of Provence, whilst the hills are not elevated enough to produce the dangerous squalls of Scotland or Switzerland. The scenery about the *Lac de Valcarres* is the desolate plain of the Camargue, in the delta of the Rhone, a region of great interest for its strongly marked melancholy character, but generally avoided even by rather adventurous travellers on account of the dreaded paludine fever that clings to its victim long after the first attack.

France has an immense advantage over England in the better harmony between her cities and towns and the country where they are placed. In England it rarely happens that a town adds to the beauty of a landscape; in France it often does so. In England there are many towns that are quite absolutely and hideously destructive of landscape beauty; in France there are very few. The consequence is that in France a lover of landscape does not feel that dislike to human interference which he so easily acquires in England, and which in some of our best writers, who feel most intensely and acutely, has become positive hatred and exasperation. The desire to render the French rivers navigable has caused interference with their banks which is not always favourable to their beauty. The clever engineers who take so much care of the great rivers

* The *Lac du Bourget* is said to be the one that suggested to Lamartine his beautiful poem of 'Le Lac.'

† The Étang de Berre is more than twelve miles long and ten miles in its greatest width, that of Valcarres is about thirteen miles by six; but its shape is very irregular.

MANTES LA JOLIE

Painted by COROT

Reproduced in Photogravure by *DUJARDIN*

The original picture is the prettiest Corot I ever saw, full of a delicate sentiment about the place represented, and very pleasing in quiet grey and green colour; but, of course, without any pretension to accurate drawing of details. In his earlier practice Corot's drawing was hard and detailed; but he afterwards adopted a very slight manner intended to express his sentiment and no more. His pictures of this later time are painted but not drawn, and the painting is done with a minimum of apparent *labour, though Corot may often have struggled with his 'values' as draughtsmen struggle with their forms.*

COROT

and display so much ability in dealing with the difficulties which they present, are responsible for having replaced many a mile of beautiful natural shore with well-built but wearisome river wall. The French engineers are a very influential class of men, and they easily obtain authority to deal with the rivers as they please. The latest instance of this has been their gigantic experiment upon the Rhone, an experiment which most of the inhabitants consider to be rather worse than useless, though it has cost eighty millions of francs.*

The effect of climate on the appearance of landscape is well known in some of its elementary conditions, such as the verdure of a moist country like Ireland and the aridity of Don Quixote's country in Spain, but in trying to imagine the appearance of foreign countries with which we are not familiar we often commit the great mistake of attributing to them one climate when they have many. There is no 'French climate,' but there are a number of climates differing from each other to such a degree as to have scarcely a characteristic in common.† Geographers estimate climate by the fall of rain, the prevalence of winds, the degrees of temperature, but a more difficult criterion, and one more suited to our present subject, would be the effect on the colouring of landscape. I know a distinguished French art critic who has the most decided ideas about the tones given to landscapes by different French atmospheres; and I have no doubt that a very careful observer might arrive at some interesting results by living in each of the different climates for a considerable length of time, but I doubt the value of the conclusions arrived at by merely travelling. It may happen that on the occasion of your visit the country does not wear its most characteristic colouring. For example, I remember that M. Taine (who is not the critic just alluded to) gives in his *Notes on England* a short account of a tour in Scotland, and his description of the colouring of the Highland lakes is that the distant mountains were bluish and the water black. After leaving the Crinan Canal M. Taine saw the rocky islands detached against a pale azure. Now, I do not dispute the truth of this description, as it often

* The works consist in deflecting the current in many places by means of walls or breakwaters, but often with the unforeseen result that new shoals have been created in places where, as for example near the suspension bridge at Beaucaire, they are in the highest degree inconvenient. The landowners dislike the works, but they have made steam navigation possible when the water is very low.

† France is usually considered to have seven distinctly marked climates rather differently named by different geographers. Reclus calls them 'les climats Vosgien, Parisien, Breton, Girondin, Auvergnat, Lyonnais, et Mediterranéen.' It seems natural enough that the climate of Brittany should differ from that of the Mediterranean coast, but the immense difference between Lyons and Marseilles would never be guessed without observation.

happens for several days together that the colouring even of the West Highlands is dull and commonplace, but to any one who, like Mr. William Black, or the writer of these pages, is intimately acquainted with the marvellously powerful colouring of those landscapes under their grandest effects, M. Taine's description must seem utterly inadequate if taken generally. I should say with regard to the two parts of France I know best that in the country about Paris and a little south of it there is often a milky delicacy in the colouring which is not familiar to me in England, whilst in the Morvan I have at times found the Highland colouring again, but of inferior intensity, and at other times a strength of illumination quite unknown in Great Britain. I am less intimately acquainted with the southern mountains, but the impression they leave on one whose early experience has been in the north is that their pale greys and luminous azures are beautiful rather by delicacy than by strength, and are scarcely a compensation for the northern purples and deep ultramarine, not to speak of the Highland russet and gold. The colouring of Provence is pretty in spring when the fields are still green and the mulberry-trees are in leaf and the dark cypress and grey olive are only graver notes in the brightness, whilst the desolation of the stony hills is prevented from becoming oppressive by the freshness of the foreground, but when the hot sun and the dry wind have scorched every remnant of verdure, when any grass that remains is merely ungathered hay, and you have nothing but flying dust and blinding light, then the great truth is borne in upon one that it is Rain which is the true colour-magician, though he may veil himself in a vesture of grey cloud.

CHAPTER XVI.

The Geography of Beauty and Art.

OPTIMISTS who find a pleasure in representing the life of ordinary mortals as being happier than it really is have a temptingly easy method with regard to the beauty of the world. They say, 'Behold how generous Nature lavishes all her glories upon us! What infinite beauty there is in mountain, lake, and forest! What a poetic charm in the flow of crystal streams!' We have only to think in this strain for a little while to intoxicate ourselves with self-congratulation on the fact that we inhabit a world where all these beautiful things are to be found.

I wonder if it has ever occurred to the reader to reflect that the places he passes through so easily are places of permanent habitation to others, and what a matter of chance it is, in the case of most men who have to earn their living, whether their lot shall be cast in some spot where natural beauty is accessible, or in one that is hopelessly far away from it. The distribution of landscape beauty is so unequal that it may possibly not be given to us in the whole course of our existence, and, what is saddest of all, the more human beings are congregated together the smaller is their chance of enjoying it, since they themselves are the greatest destroyers of it, partly from carelessness and ignorance, but partly from hard necessity. There is a beautiful passage by a distinguished modern author in which he speaks of the mountains as great natural cathedrals, but they differ from those built by human architects in being generally remote from great congregations of mankind instead of standing in the midst of them. A few cities are surrounded by noble landscape, but the great centres of business and industry are situated in places where they can easily expand, and who that has once seen it can

> 'Forget six counties overhung with smoke,
> Forget the snorting steam and piston-stroke,
> Forget the spreading of the hideous town?'

It spreads over the beautiful fields, first blighting them into the black desert known as 'building-ground,' then covering them with dreary brick or stone. It destroys every vestige of natural beauty on the

banks of streams, either confining them between walls or sending them through a gloomy tunnel and converting them into offensive sewers. For miles round the great cities there is hardly any bit of unspoilt nature remaining; only by chance some old park may happen to be preserved. There even comes at last a condition of things in which the centre of a great city is more agreeable than its outskirts, for in the centre there may be an artificial restoration of beauty by gardens and architecture whilst in the outskirts natural beauty has been everywhere ravaged and ruined, and there is nothing to take its place. Meanwhile in remote mountainous districts a few herdsmen are tending their kine on the roofs and ledges of the great natural cathedrals, and remain for the most part perfectly indifferent both to the magnificence of the mountains themselves and to the glorious effects by which their majesty is exhibited in all its pomp and state. Nor is the loss at all adequately expressed by mentioning only the mountains, except to those who know them intimately. Nobody who is not acquainted with some mountain land has ever seen a torrent, or the grandeur of a pine-forest, or even the rural beauty of a green field, for green fields themselves are monotonous in Dutch lowlands, and need, to be appreciated, the contrast of wild brown or purple heath and rocky, rough land, over which the little burn may tumble merrily before it waters the patch of emerald grass below. It is not the great masses of frozen granite that are the most precious gift of nature in a mountainous country, but all the innumerable nooks that give such endless interest to exploration, the enchanted solitudes where the wild Alpine flowers bloom in millions, and the fair sloping pastures that lie in the great hollows and come up to the chestnut glades, or touch the foot of the precipice. There are no gardens like the natural lawns of short, soft grass that lie close to the roughest land in the world; there are no parks like those natural parks, where there is no intentional arrangement, where the great trees have been planted by the accident of wind-borne seed and happily favourable site, and the glades are opened by no art of land-owner or gardener. And yet vast quantities of this beauty are as much wasted as they were before man came upon the planet, and whilst human beings are living by hundreds of thousands in the midst of hideousness of their own creation, the eagle looks down on many a lonely dell that would be a paradise if there were anybody to enjoy it.

Not only are men kept away from natural beauty by living in cities, but they are severed from it by being ill-placed even in the most open country. Natural landscape is not always beautiful; it is often bare,

WINDSOR

Etched by ALFRED DAWSON

This is not so much a view of Windsor Castle as an impression received from the landscape of which the Castle forms a part. It shows how easily even so vast a pile may, when partially hidden by trees and foreshortened in perspective, be so amalgamated with the landscape as to become rather its happy completion than any overpowering display of human constructiveness. This is greatly due, in the example before us, to the broken character of the outline presented by Windsor, and the variety of its masses. The round tower is the one dominant mass, and the minor towers serve to connect it with the landscape by a decreasing assertion of human power. In the present etching this kind of assertion dies away in the houses and the bridge, and the foreground is almost as much pure nature as the sky. It is interesting to compare Windsor with such an uncompromising edifice as the royal palace at Madrid, which could never be connected with any landscape; or to that at Versailles, which only belongs on one side to a dreary sort of barrack-yard, and on the other to the most artificial garden in the world.

bleak, and ugly to a degree that we seldom realise, because we pass through ugly places as quickly as we can, and willingly forget them. Artists are responsible for much of our false impression about the beauty of the world. They concentrate from right and left what is pretty and agreeable, they compose these materials into charming pictures, and enhance their delightfulness by the most favourable effects. I have sometimes amused myself by doing exactly the contrary. I have taken some ugly scene in nature, and drawn it purposely just as it was, without palliation of its defects and without disguising its poverty by pleasant material borrowed from another place. Studies of this kind reveal better than any others the common ugliness of nature.

I have said something in the Preface about the curious difference between the public appreciation of literature and art, by which a plain statement of fact is willingly admitted in words, whilst a drawing is always expected to be pretty. There are, however, a few artists who have perceived the use that might be made of ugly landscape in giving an impression of sadness and dreariness. Amongst these I cannot mention one who has studied ugly landscape to better purpose than J. F. Millet. He lived close to the most magnificent sylvan beauty in the forest of Fontainebleau, but he painted very little of it, and preferred as backgrounds for his dull, overworked peasants, the dreariest fields in the plain of Barbizon. In 'The Spaders,' for example, given in Sensier's biography, the background is a bare hill and the foreground nothing but earth that the men are digging, diversified by a bit of bramble. In the famous picture of 'The Angelus,' which represents a man and a woman pausing to pray when they hear the evening bell, the ground goes up to a high horizon line, and occupies two-thirds of the picture, but it is only a common potato-field. Following the example of Millet, many other French rustic painters have been contented with landscape material of the simplest and apparently the most uninteresting kind for their backgrounds, but the reason generally is that they wanted to make us feel the dulness of rustic existence. Historical painters also know the value of a dreary background. There is a huge and unpleasant, but very powerful, picture by Cormon in the Luxembourg representing the flight of Cain with his family, and the painter has most carefully abstained from everything that could make nature in the least cheering or agreeable. They are traversing a hilly but perfectly arid landscape, where not a patch of green relieves the tawny aspect of an unfriendly world. The effect in this instance is greatly enhanced by the size of the canvas, which is perfectly oppressive, as it was intended to be. In the Salon of 1882

there was a picture by Pedro Lira representing 'The Remorse of Cain,' and here also the discouraging effect of barren landscape was employed. Cain (a naked figure with his back to the spectator) crouches with his face to a wall of rock, clutching a protuberance of it with his hand. Nothing but rock is visible, and we feel it to be a landscape that must make despair itself more hopeless. Such is the effect of appearances on our minds that, although lovely scenery has not in reality any more sympathy with us than a stony landscape, we should feel Cain's lot to be less desperate if nature smiled around him. Some readers will remember the story of the two princes, sons of Clovis II., who were 'énervés'* and set adrift on the Seine, when their boat was carried down by the current to Jumièges. A fine picture of this subject was painted by Luminais, and it was remarkable, amongst other good qualities, for the excellent judgment with which the landscape was introduced. The princes lie on a couch arranged for them with some degree of royal luxury in a rude boat, but the large cushions that support their heads and the embroidered coverlet that trails in the water only serve to make the river scenery more desolate. A common artist would have chosen a pretty river landscape to make his picture more agreeable, but Luminais, who has imagination, either sought the dreariest reach on the Seine or purposely invented a long stretch of muddy water and desolate shore. Not a habitation, not a sign of life, is to be seen. One uprooted tree floats down the turbid stream, and there is just a little patch of scrubby wood to the right. To make the dreariness of land and water more strongly felt, the artist placed his horizon very high, and the unshapely hills rise under a sky as uninteresting in its commonplace cloudiness as the water in its monotonous ripple.

The same art in using very dreary landscape for a purpose may be observed in Mr. John Collier's picture 'The Last Voyage of Henry Hudson,' which transports us into the terrible Arctic regions. Here, indeed, we reach the extreme of all possible discouragement that can be conveyed to the human mind by landscape on account of the obvious connection between the icy barrenness that the eye sees, and the death from cold and hunger that the mind has to apprehend. What chance is there for these lost ones in the boat?—what food on that coast of frozen rock?—what heat from that air-chilling iceberg? Such landscape has its

* The word *énervé* has two senses corresponding to the two senses of the substantive *nerf*, which may mean either nerve or tendon. The princes who are called '*Les Énervés de Jumièges*' are said to have had their tendons cut to make them helpless when they were cast adrift.

own sublimity, and even its own delicate beauty of rosy and azure colouring and lambent, palpitating light of aurora borealis; and yet it is dreadful otherwise than by ugliness, dreadful by its discouragement of human effort, by the stern veto that it puts on all human civilisation. The grimiest ground near Liverpool or Leeds is cheerful in comparison with those pure arctic snows, those magical castles of emerald and sapphire ice.

We need not go so far as the Arctic regions to feel effects of dreariness in all their power. Our own island has regions of miserable desolation, of which perhaps the worst that I have seen is the great moor of Rannoch. There is an excellent description of it in Macculloch, hardly to be surpassed for the skill with which it conveys the depressing aspect of such scenery:—

'Pray imagine the moor of Rannoch; for who can describe it? A great level (I hope the word will pardon this abuse of it) a thousand feet above the sea, sixteen or twenty miles long and nearly as much wide, bounded by mountains so distant as scarcely to form an apprehensible boundary; open, silent, solitary; an ocean of blackness and bogs, a world before chaos; not so good as chaos, since its elements are only rocks and bogs, with a few pools of water, bogs of the Styx and waters of Cocytus, with one great, long, sinuous, flat, dreary, black Acheron-like lake, Loch Lydoch, near which arose three fir-trees just enough to remind me of the vacuity of all the rest. Not a sheep nor a cow; even the crow shunned it and wheeled his croaking flight far off to better regions. If there was a blade of grass anywhere it was concealed by the dark stems of the black, muddy sedges and by the yellow, melancholy rush of the bogs.'

A modern landscape-painter would feel the dreariness of such a scene, and try to communicate the idea of it by the help of a sad effect, but it is curious how little the old masters cared for the melancholy aspects of nature, even when the subject most seemed to require it. There is a very fine old woodcut drawn on the wood by Titian himself and engraved by Domenico dalle Grecche, which represents 'St. Jerome in the Desert.'* To my taste this is one of the very noblest of all Titian's landscapes, both by the imposing grandeur of its subject and the large, manly, comprehensive character of its execution—so superior, intellectually, to the finical details of modern imitative work—but when we consider the appropriateness of the selection with reference to landscape character our only conclusion must be that Titian did not take that into consideration, but simply thought about making a noble and interesting drawing. The 'Desert' to which St. Jerome has retired is not a desert at all, but a delightful valley watered by a swiftly flowing stream that passes at the foot of a crag which is adorned by beautiful foliage.

* Reproduced in *L'Art*, Vol. ix. p. 140.

Then you have a pleasant little plain which, in so well-watered a region, must be of the freshest green. Beyond this the land rises in rich woods till the view is closed by a noble range of Alpine mountains. There is a road on the bank of the stream, along which two men are driving a pack-horse, and the same road is carried up the side of the cliff, where it is well protected by a rail. A lion and a bear are either fighting or playing together in the plain, and St. Jerome is watching them in an attitude that expresses lively interest, and even some excitement, but a monk on the road and the two travellers with the pack-horse are quite indifferent to the wild beasts. All this is an excellent example of the temper of a great old master, thinking about a fine composition and caring nothing for appropriateness. There is more of the dreadful desert in one line of Shelley than in all this agreeable drawing. In the sonnet on Ozymandias, after describing the shattered statue, he ends with a few words that leave you in the midst of an arid immensity.

'Round the decay
Of that colossal wreck, *boundless and bare*
The lone and level sands stretch far away.'

The fine landscape which Titian substituted for the desert, thereby favouring St. Jerome with an unduly delightful place of retreat, was no doubt suggested to him by reminiscences of the Cadore country, or may have been a sketch taken in that region. The variety and richness of Italian landscape, from the Alps to the Sicilian sea, and the noble beginning of landscape-painting made by Titian, might have been expected to lead to a much earlier development of the art in its full extent than that which really took place, but the progress towards modern comprehensiveness and catholicity of interest in nature was slow and undecided, and has required the collaboration of other countries. It has long seemed to me a matter of regret that the influence of the Cadore country, through Titian, should not have led to the formation of a school of landscape-painters in Italy addicted to noble subjects, and disposed to treat them in a style above the pettiness of northern naturalism, but the time was not ripe for landscape-painting, which received its first really effectual impetus from Claude. His residence in Italy was fortunate for the art, not that he saw in it what Titian saw, but because the Italy of Claude was a very convenient sketching-ground for an artist of his tastes. Those materials and arrangements of his, which to a modern landscape-painter have such an intensely conventional appearance, were, when Claude made use of them, the best materials

VIRGIN AND CHILD, with Landscape

Pen-drawing by TITIAN

Reproduced in Photogravure by *A. DAWSON*

This illustration serves two purposes. It shows Titian's treatment of landscape in his pen-sketches and his way of combining figures with landscape, when both were important in the picture. I do not know a finer example. The landscape contains all the elements of landscape beauty, though the drawing is of a most summary kind, and the Virgin and Child are drawn with the utmost dignity of style. The necessity for Titian's large treatment of landscape will be at once understood if the reader will imagine the same scene behind the Virgin, but translated into strict realism. Style in figures makes style in the accompanying landscape an ineluctable necessity.

in the world, and the most novel as well as the most beautiful arrangements. Nothing could have been better, nothing more suitable for art, than landscapes in which ruined temples recalled the historic past whilst the land where they were situated offered every charm of beautifully undulated ground, noble vegetation, refreshing waters, and hilly or mountainous distances, always sufficient to give interest to the picture but never overpowering it. The association with classical poetry had also its own advantages. Thanks to that Claude appeared an inheritor of the Virgilian inspiration, and was therefore not so isolated as he would have been with nature only for his muse. The Italy that Claude painted was an Italy of his own which he really found there, but it is only one aspect of that Italy which is visible to the painters of to-day, artists who seek for sublimities of form which to his taste would have been crude and harsh, and destructive of the Virgilian amenity, artists who seek, too, for a brilliance of colour and a steady glare of unmitigated sunshine when he would have looked for unobtrusive tones, and veiled his sunshine in a poetic haze.

Although Italy is a mountainous country, so that either lofty mountains or hilly ranges of some importance are visible from every part of it, whilst many of its least celebrated elevations are far higher than the most famous mountains of Great Britain, there has never been an Italian school of landscape that studied mountain form and colour with any closeness of affectionate observation comparable to that of modern English and Scottish landscape-painters. The galleries are filled with figure pictures, the churches with saints and Madonnas, and until the new school came into being, a school entirely dissevered from the past, and influenced more by photography than art, there were no professed landscapes, so far as I am aware, that showed any closer study of nature than the vigorous but unobservant compositions of Salvator Rosa. In recent times Italian landscape has been most carefully studied by Englishmen who had prepared themselves for convenient work from nature by their mastery of water-colour, and who had been led to love the scenery of Italy by a combined interest in pure nature, learned in English fields, and respect for the famous name of Claude. In France Aligny put aside the traditions of 'le grand paysage' to find a still grander landscape in reality, and when he visited Italy soon discovered that there were elements in Italian scenery exactly suited to his mind. A certain comparison may be established between Titian and Aligny so far as their study of landscape was concerned. Both loved noble Italian subjects and both had a preference for the pen, and for an

intentionally simplified interpretation of nature. Aligny had a strong appreciation of beautiful lines in landscape, and he found these in abundance amongst the minor Italian hills. His treatment of trees, especially in the middle distance, reminds one both of Titian and Dürer. His work with the pen was of the most abstract character, rejecting local colour altogether, and admitting only just so much of light and shade as was necessary to distinguish some of his masses, and the abstraction went so far as to omit ruggedness in a mountain outline in order to get the clear sweep of it,* yet in his time (the first half of this century) he was, amongst Continental artists, one of the closest and most loving students of natural beauty in Italy.

It is a part of human nature to take a far keener interest in landscapes which are closely associated with humanity than in those which, however magnificent and sublime, show hardly any signs of human life and habitation, so that the Italian peninsula, by the number of its towns and villages, its visible associations with past history, and the evidence of Man's labour almost everywhere, was a much more congenial field for the beginnings of landscape-painting than the great northern peninsula of Scandinavia. As, however, mankind advance towards the scientific stage, they become less exclusively interested in humanity, and they reach at last a condition of thought and feeling in which they are able to feel a sustained interest in pure nature, with no more reference to human interest than that which must always remain between the man who observes an object and the object which is observed. Whenever this stage is reached a vast addition is made to the fields of landscape study. The artist is no longer confined to regions where he may find picturesque cities or classic ruins, but may travel and sketch in any country where he can find natural sublimity or beauty. Now, although the regions famous for historical and archaeological associations are of small extent, being limited to countries of an ancient civilisation, those where natural beauty is to be found are so extensive as to be absolutely inexhaustible. I have only space to glance at these, and am the less disposed to dwell upon them that I have not been a great traveller, but our knowledge is not strictly limited by what we have seen with our bodily sight; and if we know certain classes of scenery well we can easily, by the help of materials collected by artists and travellers, imagine scenes that belong to them. In an age like the present, when men have opened their eyes to nature and do not limit their admiration to 'what savage Rosa dashed or

* This tendency is exactly the opposite of that prevalent in our own picturesque school, which exaggerates every protuberance to make ruggedness more rugged.

learned Poussin drew,' we are not any longer in danger of confining our minds to classical Italy.

Everything that is successfully undertaken in our time has been attempted by some precursor whose work did not lead to any immediate development. In this way it must be admitted that Ruysdael was the father of those who paint the wild northern landscape. He did not see it with our modern eyes, he did not see it so clearly and truly as modern Scandinavian artists who have studied painting at Dusseldorf and gone back to their lakes with an educated skill, but he could love wild nature in his own grave way, and paint a torrent tumbling over rocks under a grey sky without desiring to embellish the landscape with any classical reminiscence. The full representation of Swedish and Norwegian landscape is, however, possible only in a century like our own. In Ruysdael's time nobody could have painted a Norwegian fiord, in our own time there are many artists, not only of Scandinavian but also of English or German origin, who can enter thoroughly into the northern landscape and paint it with complete enjoyment of its own beauty, free from the temptation to introduce elements not its own. For them the lonely land-locked waters, the dark fir-woods, grey rocks, wild moors, and snow-capped mountains, are enough. If they need a little human life they are content to give it no more than its due importance in the thinly peopled country. The habitations may be few and rude, but they are nearer to nature and less destructive to natural scenery than the well-slated stone houses of our advanced industrial population.

Scandinavia has now its own native landscape-painters, and so has every country, from Holland to Russia, which comes within the range of German influence. Every international exhibition gives evidence of the general awakening to the presence of natural beauty even in regions where there was hardly any precedent for admiring it, whilst in countries, long famous for their connexion with art, but not with landscape art, countries such as Greece, where the human figure was perfectly carved, or Spain, where it was perfectly painted, the modern landscape exploration has discovered an infinite wealth of material neglected for countless ages. Spain contains within its boundaries the extremes of ugliest aridity and most romantic loveliness, the contrasts that stimulate the artistic faculties to the utmost. A distinguished artist gave it the epithet 'grim'—'grim Spain' he called it, laconically. We know that much of it is treeless and mountainous, with great spaces of plain or plateau and a climate more remarkable for intensity of light than variety of effect. The absence of large waters in the interior, the glare of sunshine, and the

dust, make Spain as nearly the opposite of Scotland and of Norway as a mountainous land well can be. And although there is variety enough in the country if taken a whole it is horribly monotonous in parts. 'It was not his books of chivalry that drove Don Quixote mad,' says an observant traveller,* 'they only supplied a channel for his disordered fancy. The real cause—no one who has seen the country can doubt it—was the heart-breaking monotony of the scenery by which the poor gentleman was surrounded. Natures like that of Sancho might be dulled and blunted merely, but a mind of higher temper could only go crazy. Phlegm or insanity, one of these two, must be the result of such a prospect day after day before the eyes.' Elsewhere the same writer says that he could not endure the idea of a pedestrian excursion in La Mancha. 'No creature except a camel or an ostrich would have thought of walking for pleasure over such a country. As far as the eye could see—and in La Mancha the eye can see very far—a rolling prairie of reddish brown lay baking into brick-dust under a powerful sun. There was not a tree, bush, or green thing within the limits of the horizon to hint the possibility of shade or moisture, nothing but parched thistles, spare stubble, glare, heat, and drought.'† This is 'grim Spain,' 'tawny Spain,' indeed, but it ought not to make us forget the wonderfully situated cities Toledo, Cuenca, Ronda, Segovia, Alarcon, on their craggy heights half encircled by rapid and picturesque rivers, nor the park-like scenery, wooded, as Ford tells us, 'with oak, pine, and cedar, and freshened with rivulets as you go to Huerta del Rey'—nor the Vierzo, with its rivers teeming with trout, and supplied with water from lakes kept full by streams from the snowy sierras, 'a perfect paradise where Ceres and Bacchus, Flora and Pomona, might dwell together'—nor the three hundred square leagues of hill and dale, river and forest, that constitute the Principality of the Asturias—nor the marvellous landscape visible from the 'magic casements' of the Alhambra, rich with trees and gardens near the incomparable palace, and stretching away over leagues of beauty to the snowy crests of the Sierra Nevada.

It is wonderful that a great school of painting should have existed in Spain, a school that had mastered the technical difficulties of the art, yet did not care to apply its acquired power to the illustration of such a land. It is wonderful, too, that the prodigal abundance of natural

* Don Quixote's Country, *Cornhill Magazine* for April 1867.

† For a contrast between two quite opposite kinds of equally disagreeable landscape the reader may compare this very effective description with the equally powerful one by Macculloch of the moor of Rannoch already quoted in this chapter.

beauty in Switzerland should have excited, until the days of Rousseau, so little admiration, and that we should possess, in the engraved illustrations to De Saussure, such clear evidence of the wretched condition of landscape art in relation to mountain scenery at a date comparatively so near to us as the close of the eighteenth century. De Saussure was, like our own Ruskin, an author in easy circumstances who did the best he could with his books; but the distance between the illustrations of the *Voyages dans les Alpes* and the engravings from mountain studies in *Modern Painters* is so prodigious that it seems as if they belonged to different ages of civilisation. One would believe, on comparing the coarse work of such engravers as Wexelberg, Töpffer, and G. Geissler, after paintings or drawings by M. T. Bourrit and Theodore de Saussure, with the delicate and intelligent engravings of Le Keux, Armytage, and Cuff, after Mr. Ruskin's own keenly observant studies, that the first had been executed in the very earliest ages of engraving and the second in the time of its fullest development. But that is not the real state of the case. The art of engraving had reached the highest perfection long before De Saussure's day; it was the knowledge of landscape that was wanting. His illustrators felt pretty safe in following an outline, though they did not draw outlines very well; but when they had to fill up an enclosed space with characteristic detail, they were all hopelessly at sea, and blackened their coppers with great spaces of utterly unintelligent labour. I do not say this to blame dead men who toiled in their time with praiseworthy patience, and doubtless did their best; and it is probable that if we had lived in that age we ourselves should have done no better: but I take their work as curious and valuable evidence that at the end of the last century nobody in Switzerland could as yet approach the drawing of an Alp, even with the help of a really scientific critic like De Saussure. Since then Calame and others have illustrated the country with better knowledge, but even at the present day the landscape of Switzerland does not occupy, in the fine arts, a position at all corresponding to its paramount rank in European nature; and the difference is so great that we might have taken a keener interest in Swiss landscape if we had never cared for landscape-painting at all. There exists, no doubt, a very keen interest in the Alps, but it is almost entirely athletic or scientific, hardly at all artistic. It is not possible, I believe, to find the name of any really great landscape-painter, in any country, who has made the Alps his favourite subject. Turner did not exactly avoid them, and when he did draw them it was with penetrating observation and an unprecedented power of conveying the impression produced by their

prodigious size and inexhaustible detail; indeed, Turner so revelled in the detail that although he could not give all that was in nature he added much, to the same purpose, from his own prolific imagination. But although Turner proved his exceptional competence to deal with material of such difficulty we do not find that he devoted himself to it, or even that he gave it any considerable proportion of his time. There are, it is true, a number of sketches of Alpine scenery, or of places with Alpine distances, amongst the drawings, but they bear a small proportion to the vastness of the whole nineteen thousand; and in the Turner Gallery, a collection of more than a hundred pictures selected by himself to represent his talent and his taste, we find two pictures only of Alpine subjects, the *Cottage destroyed by an Avalanche*, and the *Snowstorm with Hannibal and his Army crossing the Alps.* The dates of both these works are early (at or about 1812), and one of them is of unimportant dimensions. In the same collection, where all the Alps together are represented by only two pictures, one of which has a military and historical rather than a landscape motive, whilst the other has a cottage and not a mountain for its subject, a single Italian city is represented by no less than eleven pictures. It is true that the city is Venice.

Our other famous landscape-painters—Constable, Linnell, and their successors—have found their most suitable material in our own island, and often in parts of it which never in the faintest degree can even suggest a reminiscence of the Alps. The few northern artists who have done justice to our own mountains have seldom chosen to represent them under the snows of winter, when they remind us in some degree of Switzerland. The French school of landscape-painters are quite remarkable for the care with which they avoid magnificent mountains. They seldom go beyond a gentle hill, of a greyish blue, behind their groups of trees.

Mr. Ruskin, whose own love of Alpine scenery caused him to feel the neglect of it by painters, attributed it to the difficulty of dealing with the quantity of material presented by the great mountains, to the necessity for painting so many details fairly in order to give any approximate idea of that great multiplicity of parts which concur to produce the impression of immensity. This, no doubt, is one of the reasons why Switzerland is discouraging; but artists and dealers affirm that Swiss subjects do not generally make agreeable pictures, whether slightly or elaborately painted. A picture is not merely a reflection of nature, it is a thing in itself; and it may be a rich-looking thing, like a fine Linnell; or a hard, and meagre, and cold-looking thing, like many pictures of Alpine scenery that could

THE WINDMILL

Painted by J. LINNELL

Reproduced in Photogravure by *A. DAWSON*

This well-known little picture in the National Gallery is an excellent illustration of a truth very familiar to landscape-painters, that accessories are often quite as important as the permanent elements in a scene. Imagine a sky without a cloud, the foreground without cattle, and the little eminence without the windmill. Land and water would be there still; but what would become of the picture? As we see it, this is one of Linnell's happiest compositions. Special thanks are due to Mr. Dawson for the artistic taste and patience bestowed on the engraving which was by no means the simple mechanical matter that photogravure is commonly supposed to be.

be mentioned. It would be impossible to mention anything less likely to give aesthetic pleasure than the illustrations to De Saussure; and even the engravings from Mr. Ruskin's drawings, so admirable for their delicate veracity, would not become pictures if they were copied with the addition of colour. The same may be said of the fine photographs of Alpine scenery, very valuable from the scientific point of view, which have been produced by the brothers Bisson and others. My conclusion is, therefore, the conclusion at which all artists seem to arrive in their mature years, that there are things which are magnificent in nature, but not so suitable for art as things that are less magnificent, and that Alps, icebergs, and volcanic eruptions, are amongst them.

We have seen in the chapter on the *Odyssey* in what degree the Greek intellect took note of surrounding landscape. If the paintings of Greek artists had come down to us, we might have observed with interest how far they had been impressed by surrounding mountain forms; but in the absence of material evidence we can only suppose that if such forms were drawn at all it must have been in a clear manner, and that the variety of natural outlines would probably be much simplified. There is no reason to suppose that the ancient Greeks could colour landscape otherwise than in a conventional, decorative way. We know, on the authority of travellers, that the natural landscape of Greece is remarkable for two chief characteristics. The atmosphere is excessively clear and peculiarly favourable to the definition of mountain form, whilst the colour is of remarkable purity and brightness, yet without crudity. The most vivid idea of it has been given by Professor Colvin. He begins by telling us of the Saronic Gulf, that 'the sea which leaps from the prow, and flashes under the following gale, is not sea, but a sapphire wine of fabulous colour and intensity. The mountains, with their fainter azure, are mountains of enchantment; far off behind some of those foldings on the right, you know, lie ruins of old fame—Tiryns, and Mycenae, and Cleonae; on the left, the arid precipices of the Megarid descend in sunshine to the blue; in front, the gulf is almost closed by a crowd of steep and lonely coast and island forms which you have not yet learnt to name or distinguish.' Evidently amongst natural things and qualities what struck Professor Colvin the most forcibly was the clearness of the Athenian atmosphere. 'Until one has seen the effects of sculpture and architecture in that sun and that shadow, one can but feebly guess what Greek sculpture and Greek architecture mean. The moment you see shadows like these—strong, sharp, and defined as by a needle's point, yet full, in the shaded surface, of a blue and bloomy light—you have

gained a new revelation as to the powers and effects of sculpture. In the West we know nothing of this daylight, which at the same time cuts out every shadow into the sharpest definiteness and force of contrast, and floods all that lies within the shadow with a soft and exquisite clearness. . . . . In other climates, it is only in particular states of the weather that the remote ever seems so close, and then with an effect which is sharp and hard as well as clear: here the clearness is soft; nothing cuts or glitters, seen through that magic distance; the air has not only a new transparency, so that you can see farther into it than elsewhere, but a new quality, like some crystal of an unknown water, so that to see into it is greater glory.' Speaking of the 'ranges and promontories of sterile limestone,' the same writer observes that 'the colours of them are as austere and delicate as the forms. If here the scar of some old quarry throws a stain, or there the clinging of some thin leafage spreads a bloom, the stain is of precious gold, and the bloom of silver. Between the blue of the sky and the tenfold blue of the sea, these bare ranges seem, beneath that daylight, to present a whole system of noble colour flung abroad over perfect forms. And wherever, in the general sterility, you find a little moderate verdure—a little moist grass, a cluster of cypresses—or whenever your eye lights upon the one wood of the district, the long olive-grove of the Cephissus, you are struck with a sudden sense of richness, and feel as if the splendours of the tropics would be nothing to this.'*

The slightest attempt to describe, with such a degree of detail as this, the immensely varied landscape of the world, would land us in endless geography and be the less necessary in this place that we may have occasion elsewhere to refer to the landscape of different countries; but one observation suggests itself after some consideration of the subject from our present point of view, and that is, how abundant landscape beauty is upon the world and how varied, if we think of the whole globe, yet at the same time how unequally distributed. The one quality of variety in a small space, in a space that a common man who does not travel is likely to see in his lifetime, is in itself found in the most different degrees. In England we have great variety in one island, and yet in England millions have lived and died without ever once seeing a mountain. In France the variety is equally great, but the spaces of monotony are larger; in Holland you have a level, and in Switzerland a mountainous monotony. The course of the Nile, from the great lakes to the Mediterranean, is varied, and yet the length of the river is so great, and the

* 'On Some Aspects of Athens,' in the *Portfolio* for 1876.

spaces watered by that river only are so wide that Egypt remains, for its inhabitants, not less monotonous than it was before the discovery of the great lakes, and each of those great lakes themselves is monotony in another form. For the yachtsman the Mediterranean is full of delightful variety, but for a resident at *Aiguesmortes* its tideless wave breaks ever on one dreary stretch of sand, where the walls and towers of the crusaders' city are more important than any natural object. There is beautiful scenery in Galilee, and still richer beauty at Damascus; but it is a dreary land between Joppa and Jerusalem, and who would live in the Wilderness of Judaea? Travellers in their tedious wanderings are occasionally rewarded for their toils by the sight of some lovely region that awakens their enthusiasm after the dreary desert they have passed through, and in this way we have shared the delight of Palgrave when he saw the fair Arabian country about Djebel Shomer and the noble landscapes of Nejed. So, after our imaginary fatigue in ascending the weary Nile, we find, with Baker, a sort of happiness tempered by daily danger in the grassy slopes and shady trees of the great natural park where the Baris live. Still, it is well not to forget the fate of those whose lot is cast in the very places that the traveller most willingly leaves behind. We may have a kind of pity for them like that which Tacitus felt for the ancient Germans, who lived in what he believed to be such a horrible country: 'Quis porro, praeter periculum horridi et ignoti maris, Asia aut Africa aut Italia relicta, Germaniam peteret, informem terris, asperam coelo, tristem cultu aspectuque *nisi si patria sit?*'

In the course of our travels how often does this very thought of Tacitus occur to us! 'Who in the world would live in this wretched place *unless it were his native land?*' That explains everything in the way of affectionate restfulness. Just over the little town of Nantua, near the eastern frontier of France, a huge tower of solid rock is slowly, slowly, but surely, toppling over; yet the people live on in the houses that it threatens and that it will infallibly crush one day. Men live within reach of volcanic lava streams; they establish their perilous home on the banks of rivers subject to terrible and almost calculably periodical inundations. They adhere to the soil, generation after generation, in places where it is perfectly well known that sound health is not to be hoped for. Who would live in a fever-stricken country *nisi si patria sit?* And if men will stay where health is known to suffer, is it surprising that they should dwell contentedly in places that are only destitute of beauty?

The fame of beautiful places steadily increases by the wider spread of literature and landscape-painting. The beauty of the world is better known to us to-day than that of north Britain was to our forefathers. The wonderfully comprehensive intellect of Alexander Von Humboldt had a more powerful effect than any other cause in directing attention to a comparative study of landscape as it exists over the whole surface of the globe. He did not remain satisfied, as some poet or painter might have done, with a pretty nook or corner of creation, some little Rydal Water, or lovely Loch Katrine, or picturesque Forest of Fontainebleau; he looked out over the whole world, and interested himself as much in the plateaux of Asia as in the mountains of South America, or the course of the Orinoco and the Amazon. Something of this comprehensive spirit with regard to landscape — a spirit that is independent of personal, and even of historical associations, and able to take an interest in landscape on its own account — has descended to more recent travellers who have described for us many parts of the world with skill enough to make us grateful for their observations. Through these descriptions, and through the work of landscape-painters who are also travellers, magnificent scenery at a great distance from England has become familiar to us, at least by reputation, so that we are beginning to see things more and more in their true proportions. We are no longer under the impression that the Alps of Switzerland are the only mountains of the highest rank; but we class them with other ranges in America, in Asia, and even in New Zealand. Our latest enlightenment of this kind is due to Mr. W. S. Green, who has shown us the Alps of New Zealand with their eternal snows, their gigantic glaciers, and their many unconquered peaks. We owe hearty thanks also to Miss Marianne North for the courage with which she has initiated a kind of landscape-painting in the service of science, in which the artist abandons the crafty devices of professional work, the clever arrangements and oppositions, in order to give a simple account of the vegetation and the earth-forms and colouring in countries at a distance from England. I may mention, as specially interesting and valuable in this way, her views of Lake Wakatipe in New Zealand and of Mount Earnshaw from that lake, which gave me, for the first time, a perfectly clear idea of scenery that had long awakened my curiosity. Thanks to Miss North we now know how delightful that scenery must be, with its pure blue-green waters, its yellow sands, its ample and interesting vegetation, and its magnificent distances. The descendants of the English colonists will have the advantage of possessing, within the limits of their

own southern islands, examples of the noble order of landscape which, in this century, has been so strongly and frequently reflected in English literature and art, and for them those southern Alps will have one charm, one interest, which those of central Europe have never possessed for an Englishman — the charm that never belongs to any country, whether commonplace or magnificent, *nisi si patria sit.*

CHAPTER XVII.

Mountains—For and Against.

IN youth we are so much the victims of our own personality that we take all its preferences for absolute and universal truths, not seeing that they are merely evidences of a relation between our own idiosyncrasy and the things that surround it. In later life a few of us, but only a few, make the discovery that each man has his own world made for him by a kind of natural selection from the infinitely various details of the external world.

I distinctly remember the shock of astonishment with which I first became aware that the delightfulness of mountains existed only in a relation between them and certain human beings, and that mountains had not any power over mankind generally, comparable in universality to the refrigerating effect of frost or the heating effect of fire. They were so much to me that I had the utmost difficulty in realising the inconceivable fact that for many others a mountain was simply an obstacle to roads and railways, or an oppression to the mind, or an impediment in a view. The difficulty was increased by having to acknowledge that these dislikers of mountains were not persons devoid of intelligence or insensible to the beautiful or sublime either in literature or painting. I found that they were quite as capable of intellectual perception and aesthetic emotion as the best of us, and even that their insensibility to the influences of mountainous landscape seemed to be compensated by a greater clearness of mental vision in other ways. One hesitates about making general statements to which there must be exceptions, but as a general rule I should say, that there is an antagonism between the love of mountains and the knowledge of mankind, that the lover of mountains will often be satisfied with their appearances of power and passion, their splendour and gloom, their seeming cheerfulness or melancholy, when a mind indifferent to this class of scenery might study the analogous phases of human character. But the root of the matter, both as to mountains and men, is that their deepest interest is not really in themselves; they are interesting as partial expressions of that mysterious, ever-present Power which existed before the upheaval of the oldest mountains, and

THUN

Drawing in Water-colour by ALFRED HUNT

Engraved in Line by *E. P. BRANDARD*

Ever since I first saw the drawing in Professor Oliver's collection it has remained in my memory along with a few Turners as an epitome of Switzerland. Here you have in a single view almost everything that is most characteristic of that wonderful country, the quiet little town with its roofed towers and neighbouring orchards, the broad plain and lake, and the huge barrier of mountains beyond, with their high Arctic world of snow. In the original drawing the colour is of extreme delicacy, which also is characteristic of Switzerland.

will manifest itself in new forms when they shall have been worn down to littleness by the slow action of rain and frost.

The effect of mountains as a manifestation of natural energy must, in a scientific age, be due in great measure to the curiously disproportionate influence between things seen with the eyes and things that are only apprehended by the intellect, for although a mountain is a huge object in comparison with human works it is so small an excrescence on the globe that Switzerland is proportionately an almost imperceptible roughness. To be lost in admiration at the power displayed in the upheaval of a lump of igneous rock and to be indifferent to that shown in the regular motion of the earth is as if a microscopic creature were stopped by a little roughness in the paint of a locomotive and ignorant of the machine itself. The truth may be that a planet is beyond our comprehension, that it can only be seen when at such a distance as to lose magnitude by perspective, and that nobody really imagines, or can imagine, the vastness of the earth, whilst a great mountain that we can climb in a day, or drive round in two days comfortably, is the largest object that we have mind enough to grasp.

Another reason why mountains have an influence upon us is that they are recognisable features in scenery, but this depends very much on personal instincts and tastes. Some lovers of hills and mountains (the present writer is of the number) have such an affectionately retentive memory for these objects that they always recognise them even after an absence of many years, but others retain no clear impression concerning them, so that even the most marked peculiarities of mountain structure fail to impress themselves on their memories. An ordinary person who has been bred in a mountainous country will, however, generally remember the hills that surround his home, and the character of local peculiarity that mountains give to a place is the reason why mountaineers have a stronger home-feeling and suffer more readily from nostalgia than the inhabitants of plains.

Not only does a mountain give a home-feeling to one place, but if you have been accustomed to see it from any one place you will have in a minor degree the same home-feeling in all other places from which it may be visible. There is a book by a Japanese artist giving a hundred views of the great isolated Japanese Alp, Fusi Yama. The artist takes us into all sorts of foregrounds, but that snowy peak is ever visible in the distance, and the series of drawings tells us as plainly as possible that wherever the white cone of Fusi Yama shines in the clear sky there the loving draughtsman feels himself still at home.

In this way there are regions where a certain mountain is the visible king, and all who live in sight of him have a sort of loyalty to him. On an incomparably larger scale, both for his own altitude and the radius of his influence, a great mountain may be to a range of country what the dome of St. Paul's is to the city of London, or St. Peter's to modern Rome.

But no dome ever built by human hands, however gorgeous with far-glittering gold, can have the variety of aspect which gives such a perpetual interest to a mountain. That variety is so great, so full of entertainment for the observer, that I cannot deal with it in a paragraph, and must needs reserve for it a complete chapter. Nothing in nature, except sky and ocean, approaches in changefulness the aspects of a mountain in a variable climate, and it has this great superiority over its own clouds that it is permanent in changefulness. A cloud alters really, breaks into fragments, and passes away; a mountain seems to alter, but remains; so that we have always in the memory some standard by which to measure the degree of its wonderful disguises.

The love of mountains is often very strong in those who feel the conquests of civilisation to be rather oppressively complete and absolute. A plain may be cultivated throughout, and so completely subdivided into little fields, gardens, woods, vineyards, that there is no walking to be had over it except along the straight public roads, and these are sometimes enclosed by walls so that you cannot even look into a garden. There are regions in which the artificial is so completely predominant that there is no escape from it, but a real mountain always affords that escape. On the Alps, even on the summits of our own northern hills, the land is as wild as in the prehistoric ages; there is real, unspoilt nature, protected for ever by the stern guardians Frost, Storm, and Steepness.

The neighbourhood of a mountain has this further advantage, that it places a series of different climates within easy reach of the pedestrian. There are places amongst the Alps where the valley has the climate of Italy and you can ascend without difficulty to a drier Scotland, and thence to Iceland, and finally to Spitzbergen. It is a great thing for a healthy and hardy person to have such changes without travelling far to seek them. As the mountains offer a new flora at every zone of altitude, and as they exhibit geological structure with a plainness not often visible elsewhere, they attract scientific students. The lovers of sublimity in nature, independently of positive science, find it amongst mountains in such abundance that the only danger is insensibility from excess of stimulation. Those who desire to excite a sluggish imagination

find wings to their thoughts in the mountains. Poets go to renew themselves at the unfailing sources. More than fifty years ago he who is now the most famous poet in the world gave the wisest advice in verses of the most animated eloquence. When a writer of simple prose might have tamely recommended others to seek their inspiration in the grandeur of wild nature, Victor Hugo sent them to the mountains with a voice like the sound of a trumpet, and in tones that are reverberating still:—

'O poëtes sacrés, échevelés, sublimes
Allez, et répandez vos âmes sur les cimes,
Sur les sommets de neige en butte aux aquilons,
Sur les déserts pieux où l'esprit se recueille,
Sur les bois que l'automne emporte feuille à feuille
Sur les lacs endormis dans l'ombre des vallons!

'Frères de l'aigle! aimez la montagne sauvage:
Surtout à les moments où vient un vent d'orage,
Un vent sonore et lourd qui grossit par degrés,
Emplit l'espace au loin de nuages et d'ombres,
Et penche sur le bord des précipices sombres
Les arbres effarés!'

All this is exactly what Byron really did. Instead of remaining quietly at Newstead and in London he went to Switzerland for a fresh inspiration, and found it in view of 'the Jungfrau with all her glaciers.' of 'the Dent d'Argent, shining like truth,' and the Wetterhorn. 'From whence we stood, on the Wengen Alp, we had all these in view on one side; on the other, the clouds rose from the opposite valley, curling up perpendicular precipices like the foam of the ocean of hell during a spring-tide—it was white and sulphury, and immeasurably deep in appearance.' This is the prose account of what he saw, and he also says that he and his companion 'heard the avalanches falling every five minutes nearly.' The strength of the impression was, however, too great to be confined to prose, so we find precisely these observations made use of in *Manfred*:—

'Ye avalanches, whom a breath draws down,
In mountainous o'erwhelming, come and crush me!
I hear ye momently above, beneath,
Crash with a frequent conflict. . . .
The mists boil up around the glaciers; clouds
Rise curling fast beneath me, white and sulphury,
Like foam from the roused ocean of deep hell!'

Since Byron's day the Alps have become a field of athletic rather than poetical aspirations, but a strong though unexpressed passion for the sublime in nature may often accompany athleticism and give a motive

to its energy. It would be unfair to conclude that because the members of Alpine clubs do not often express their feelings in well-turned verses or florid prose they have no feelings to express except satisfaction in exercising their legs. The truth is that the sensations experienced amongst mountains have now been uttered so often that we are scarcely disposed to repeat the expression of them, but they may be *felt* every year in all their wonder and freshness by those who stand for the first time on a glacier and look down into the azure depth of a crevasse.

The objections to mountains are twofold—practical and intellectual.

The practical objections come generally from economists who think about the wealth and convenience of nations, about their agriculture, population, manufactures. Mountainous countries are poor, thinly peopled, ill provided with means of communication. In a deep valley you have one road, and may travel up the valley or down it; on a plain the roads go wherever they are wanted. From the economist's point of view a mountain is a waste of land, and he does not quite see the force of the highlander's argument that they increase the acreage of a country. A mountain is the source of many streams, but till they reach the plain they are too rapid to be navigable. There is now, however, a possibility that utilitarian mankind may be better reconciled to mountainous countries as the power of their rushing streams may be converted into electricity and turned to practical service in the valleys.

The economist's objection to mountainous countries would be of great force if it were impossible to get away from them, but as, in fact, cities always grow to a large size only where they can conveniently do so, the consequence is that urban life on a large scale is mainly found either on flat or gently undulating ground. The capital of Great Britain has grown to its present size because the site permitted its expansion. Glasgow is less inconveniently situated than Edinburgh, and so has become the commercial capital of Scotland. It is true that the human strength of nations, and their material wealth, are generally in inverse ratio to the extent of ground covered by lofty mountains. Compare the importance of the strength contributed to the British Empire by the Highlands of Scotland and the mountainous parts of Ireland with that derived from the Scottish lowlands and the midland counties of England. In one point, the hill races are believed to be superior. They are more hardy, and therefore, in some respects, better soldiers than the lowlanders. Is not Montenegro the 'rough rock-throne of freedom?' and have not her warriors beaten back the swarm

'Of Turkish Islam for five hundred years?'

The intellectual objection to mountains is that they assume a degree of importance when they happen to be near us, which is out of all proportion to their real importance in the world. They are the biggest visible things, but they are not so big really as any forcible and original man. They have the majesty of age, and of long passive resistance to storm and frost; but beyond mere mass and weight, and power of duration, they have nothing but their changeful beauty. And yet their mass is so visibly prodigious, their duration so overwhelming to the human mind, their beauty so supreme in its own wonderful way, and full of such life-like vicissitude, that we are sometimes led to look upon them with a mistaken humility, as if they were superior to ourselves. It may even come to pass that this too obtrusive influence of the mountain may be a check and a hindrance to the development of the intellect and will. The disproportionate self-assertion of a near mountain may dwarf the distant city where the rays of intellectual light converge. At Chamouni Mont Blanc is more in people's thoughts than Paris. Even the most thoughtful men are often drawn to the mountain by the fascination of its mass. We gaze at the frozen heights as if we expected a new Moses to descend from them, and the only Moses we perceive is a wearied tourist with his guides. The last time I saw Mont Blanc it was reduced by distance to something like its proper station in the world. Across the broad green plain of La Bresse what seemed a low white cloud was visible on the far horizon. A field-glass soon resolved the cloud into a sharp snow outline and dark aiguilles. On the vast round surface of the earth the loftiest crest in Europe seemed no more than a white-sailed vessel dropping down behind the round globe-surface of the sea.

CHAPTER XVIII.

Geology and Landscape.

IT has been observed already, with reference to the landscape descriptions of Virgil, that the botany of the ancients was much more advanced than their geology. This may be accounted for by the close neighbourhood of different species of trees in the same forest, where the contrasts between them were visible to the least observant, and sure to attract the attention of the poet, whereas to see the different effects on landscape produced by chalk and granite it was necessary to travel, and when men travelled in those days it was generally on military expeditions, which gave generals and soldiers something else to think about than the art of describing landscape.

The ancients were better mineralogists than geologists, as the arts of the architect, the statuary, and the jeweller, made them acquainted with a multitude of substances found in the earth which were either useful or beautiful. This utilitarian mineralogy would lead to a sort of primitive geology by simply noting the character of the places where the desired substances were likely to be found, but I am not aware that there exists the slightest evidence in any ancient writer that he had observed the effect of mineral substances, in quantity, upon the character of the landscape. The state of feeling that characterised an intelligent citizen of ancient Rome, as in the observation of some landscape details by Virgil, and his neglect of others, is found again in the literature of the middle ages and the Renaissance, when almost every author who took any interest in landscape at all was careful to distinguish between trees, and often mentioned smaller plants by their names, especially when they had beautiful flowers, but classed all rocks together simply as 'rocks' or 'stones.' The special study of rocks in the graphic arts is entirely modern, and yet it is of infinitely greater importance here than in literature, for a reason already glanced at in this volume, the unfortunate necessity, in the graphic arts, of choosing between a statement of special truth or a falsehood, it being impossible for the draughtsman to say a thing, as a writer can, in general terms. The reader may remember a passage in the preface to the second edition of *Modern Painters*, where, in answer to some foolish critic, the author said that as an animal must

be one animal or another animal, and could not be a general animal, so a rock must be either one rock or another rock, and could not be a general rock, or it would be no rock. He also said that it was just as impossible to generalise granite and slate as to generalise a man and a cow. All this is perfectly true with reference to painting, though it would not be applicable to literature; and hence it follows that all landscape-painting which is not founded upon special observation, that is, upon the observation of species in everything, is really as monstrous animal-painting would be if it also disdained the distinctions of species.

I have no doubt that this necessity for specification in the Graphic Arts is a mark of inferiority in them, but it is an inferiority that has to be accepted. It is one of the marks of inferiority in certain languages not to possess general terms. Ernest Haeckel, when speaking of the intellectual status of the lowest savage races, says that their languages remain in a rudimentary condition, and gives as a proof of this the fact that many savage tribes have never had a word for 'animal, plant, sound, colour;' and there are many other equally simple ideas that these savages are unable to express, whereas for the different animals, plants, &c., that are familiar to them they have different names. Painting is in the same condition as these savage tribes, and must ever remain so unless it accepts monstrosity, as it is impossible to find, in the order of nature, any animal, plant, or rock, which is without species; and the slightest attempt to portray nature by any one of the graphic arts places the artist at once under that necessity of distinguishing species which is a characteristic of nature itself.

It is always a mistake to push analogies too far, and so it might be well to content ourselves with saying that geology occupies, in the study of landscape, the same position that osteology does in the study of the human figure; but if we look farther into the matter we soon discover that geology is in reality much more than the osteology of landscape, as it does not concern itself simply with the hardest substances, such as rocks, which may be compared with the bony structure of the body, but also with the softest depositions, such as alluvial mud and sand, which though incapable of tension and contraction answer in some degree to the muscles. Besides this, geology has a superiority of interest in the great variety of the substances which are the subject of its study, and in the variety of forms which result from difference of substance, and this superiority may be accepted as a compensation for the inferiority of mineral substances in their want of organised parts. These comparisons are not without interest, but whatever may be the result of

them as affecting our estimate of relative rank in geology and osteology one certain truth remains, namely, that geology, like botany, is simply a part of one great comprehensive study, anatomy, which includes all those studies of nature that aim at more accurate knowledge by separating the parts of things. For this reason, it has always seemed a mark of inconsistency in artists that they value anatomy so much with regard to the bodies of men and animals and value it so little with regard to the mineral and vegetable world. Their negligence of geology and botany often amounts to a feeling of dislike and opposition, as if the same arguments that may be used against anatomy in one instance might not, with equal force, be employed against it in another. There is a converse instance in the case of Mr. Ruskin, who is opposed to the study of human anatomy, but who has given a large space, in an important work on art, to the anatomy of mountains.

The value of geology with reference to the landscape that we see is that it explains in some measure the causes of the shapes that interest us, and tells us something of the history of the earth. Surely there cannot be any valid reason why even a practical landscape-painter should close his mind against information that may be received without any great effort, though the data on which it is founded have cost others an infinity of toil. The only danger in these studies, for artists, is that they encourage a scientific rather than an artistic habit of mind, so that if the art-faculty is not of very great strength it may be overpowered by the scientific activities. I once knew a landscape-painter whose son had some talent for art, but he had also a strong taste for geology, and his father predicted that the indulgence of this scientific taste would spoil his career as an artist. This might happen if time were given to details, such as the structure of fossils, which have nothing to do with the appearances of landscape, and there might be a frequent temptation to pass from art to science, because you can always get real science from others with very little trouble, whilst to produce real art yourself, even on the humblest scale, is a matter of infinite uncertainty and difficulty.

There is a reason for presuming that whether artists have consciously studied geology or not, they must have been influenced by it, as the truthful drawing and painting of rocks is contemporary in art with the development of geology in science. It is only in modern landscape-painting that any acceptable rock-drawing is to be found. In all old pictures whatever a rock is simply a blemish, at least with reference to the truth of nature, though as a patch of grey or brown colour it

may be artistically useful in a background. The rocks of the old masters are of two kinds, either angular, when they look as if they had been cut out by imaginative masons with stone-saws and chisels, or else lumpish, when they have the appearance of brown sacks piled up in an accidental manner. The only step of importance made by them towards a true representation of rocks was that they seized the idea of stratification, but they did not study it carefully or intelligently. How could they before the science of geology existed? Even in Wilson's time nobody could or would paint rocks as they really are. Allan Cunningham says that when Wilson began to paint landscape 'he had been long insensibly storing his mind with the beauties of natural scenery, and the picturesque mountains and glens of his native Wales had been to him an academy when he was unconscious of their influence.' It is a remarkable proof of the facility with which the eyes close themselves against what the mind has not been educated to perceive, that Wilson could have lived in Wales, and afterwards in Italy, without having received any faithful impression from the nobler rocks of either country. It may be suggested that he saw them, but was prevented by the traditions of art from painting them as they were. The evil influence of tradition may have done something to keep truthful rock-painting out of Wilson's pictures; and yet it seems hard to believe that any artist who had seen rocks clearly in nature would have contentedly substituted for them a conventional arrangement of tones that scarcely bore any relation to the colouring of the natural rocks, whilst as to their forms he took scarcely any more note of their fractures and surfaces than if they had been entirely without significance in nature. It appears as if in Wilson's time nobody had really seen such a thing as slate, though the material was used for roofing houses and schoolboys wrote upon it. Even in our own times, though some landscape-painters have given an unprecedented amount of care and attention to sea-cliffs and the rocky beds of streams, others are still able to paint them carelessly without exciting any protest, unless it comes now and then from a scientific geologist. 'In the recent exhibition of the Royal Scottish Academy,' Mr. Archibald Geikie wrote in 1865, 'no feature struck me more than the conventionality of the Scottish artists in the painting of rocks. One of the more noted of their number is content to mottle the foreground of his Highland landscapes with lumps of umber and white, worked up indeed into the external outline of rocks and stones, but utterly without character. It seemed strange that in an exhibition containing so many pictures with Highland scenes as subjects there should scarcely be one which showed that the painter had tried

to study the individuality of rock masses and boulders over and above that of hills and mountains.' Mr. Geikie then expresses his warm approval of the picture of Pegwell Bay by W. Dyce, R.A., which gave the geological structure of a chalk cliff with great fidelity, and also the worn floor of chalk on the beach and the scattered stones, whether rolled pieces of chalk or fractured flints. Mr. Geikie had a special admiration for the remarkable studies of rock scenery by Mr. E. W. Cooke, R.A. 'In looking at them,' he said, 'I am at a loss whether to wonder more at their scrupulous truth or at the amount of thought and feeling which glows through each of them.' I have also seen most faithful work by Mr. Cooke, and the fidelity of it was appreciated by most people whose love of nature was of a scientific character, but it was with his work as with that of other very close observers, it appeared rather hard in manner to those artists and critics who cared less for positive veracity than for aesthetic pleasure, and unfortunately aesthetic pleasure is of paramount importance in the fine arts. I think my old master, Mr. J. P. Pettitt, deserves mention (independently of my personal respect for his memory) on account of the trouble he took to be faithful in his paintings of rocky scenery at a time when geologists and photographers had not rendered the knowledge of stony nature so accessible as is now. Mr. Pettitt used to make careful separate studies of every piece of exposed rock that came in his way, and he was fond of rocky places, one of his great pedestrian tours having included a vast extent of the British coast. Without being exactly what is called a geologist he would think it quite a sufficient reason for making a thorough study of some cliff that he had not in his portfolio a study of the same kind of stone. He was very observant of the effects of water-sculpture in the beds of streams; and I remember, in particular, seeing him paint a picture in which he copied with great enjoyment the beautiful smooth-sided holes that are often produced by the wearing of an imprisoned stone kept in motion by water during floods. All this, it may be said, was taking a geological rather than an artistic interest in nature. It might be argued that one of the great old masters would not have paid any attention to these things, but given, in the place of them, I know not what ideas of grandeur and sublimity. To such objections the answer is that the grandeur of a real precipice far surpasses that of the ignorant ideal, because the real thing tells the story of its structure, and the false thing has no story to tell; the real thing is built like a cathedral when it is stratified, and gives evidence of even greater forces when it is not stratified, the false thing has no more structure than a piece of putty. And besides this

difference of interest, it may be safely asserted that in nature there is far more beauty, and a far greater variety of beauty, than in the false ideals of stony shapes that were invented by the misdirected genius of men. In all that concerns the forms of the earth the modern painters who have studied nature the most carefully have produced works which, however unprecedented they may seem, however remote from the examples of the old masters, do really contain not only infinitely more of truth but infinitely more of beauty also than is to be found in galleries where there is no truthful geology. The curves of water-worn rocks are often most beautiful curves, the local colouring of rocks in nature, instead of being limited to the dull brown of the old masters, is full of every variety of hue, often giving tints of indescribable delicacy, and sometimes of great richness and strength. The colouring of a river-strand of pebbles may be found to vary from rosy tints to the most beautiful blue greys. A precipice will vary in colour at different strata, and as you pass in travelling from one kind of formation to another you find sources of novelty in the form and colour of the rocks which are quite as striking as those due to differences of vegetation. From the red sandstone of Scotland to the blue slate of North Wales the transition is more remarkable than that from English hop-gardens to French vineyards.

My sympathies, as the reader sees, are here entirely on the side of knowledge and observation, as opposed to an ignorant, or at least a disdainful, conventionalism; but I am well aware, at the same time, that, although it is not difficult to perceive how much richer natural geology is in interest of all kinds than that of the old masters, the great variety, and especially the striking peculiarities of natural truth, make it extremely difficult to deal with in such a manner as to keep it subordinate to the artistic necessities of picture-making. There is an argument on the other side from the point of view of an old-fashioned art-critic, which I will endeavour to state in its full force, not as being convinced by it, but because it is more convenient to state one side of a question fully and fairly, whilst reserving objections for the time, than to be perpetually interfering with the course of an argument whilst it is going forward.

A lover of old-fashioned landscape-painting might argue against the free admission of truthful geology into painting in this manner. From the artistic point of view it is always highly desirable to avoid everything that attracts attention so as to awaken doubt or curiosity to the detriment of aesthetic pleasure. All those geological truths which are of interest to the geologist are likely, if brought forward by an artist with

any prominence, to strike the unscientific spectator either as being false or strange. Even if he believes them to be possibly true he is put out by them, and prevented from enjoying the artistic beauty of the work in peace. His notion of a rock is a sort of general notion, as of a large piece of stone that has been exposed for a long time to the weather; and if something that suggests this idea in a general way is painted for him he is content, but if you give him a hard study of some geological curiosity it does not strike him like the natural thing which he admits to be true because it is in nature, yet feels himself at liberty to neglect. A painted thing is more obtrusive than a natural thing: it claims attention, it awakens criticism, and when the subject of it is unfamiliar it provokes a feeling of opposition. If Wilson had truly painted the slate rock at Llanberis he would have spoiled the aesthetic effect of his pictures on all spectators who were not familiar enough with slate in nature to see it without the slightest surprise in art. When we look at the illustrations in geological books we soon perceive that the things illustrated would in most cases obtrude themselves as unfamiliar things, and Art should always avoid the unfamiliar. Mr. Ruskin's comparison of the difference between granite and slate with the difference between a man and a cow is perfectly sound with reference to nature, but it fails on the side of art, because all people who see pictures are familiar with the sight of men and cows, whilst it is only those who have lived or travelled in granite or slate countries who know the effect of these materials on landscape. Since Art deals only with the familiar, it is right that it should make clear distinctions between men and animals, and right also that it should be vague about rocks, which are known only to the scientific. Let us take as an example the frontispiece to the fifth edition of Lyell's *Manual of Elementary Geology*. It is engraved 'from a painting by James Hall, Esq.,' and it represents 'Strata of Red Sandstone, slightly inclined, resting on vertical schist, at the Siccar Point, near St. Abb's Head, Berwickshire.' The mere title, in the first place, is of itself sufficient to frighten away any lover of art, who would at once infer that the picture was a geological diagram. The description of the original work, given by Lyell, would only corroborate this idea:—

'In the frontispiece of this volume the reader will see a view of this classical spot, reduced from a large picture, faithfully drawn and coloured from nature by the youngest son of the late Sir James Hall. It was impossible, however, to do justice to the original sketch, in an engraving, as the contrast of the red sandstone and the light fawn-coloured vertical schists could not be expressed. From the point of view here selected, the underlying beds of the perpendicular schists

are visible through a small opening in the fractured beds of the covering of red sandstone, while on the vertical face of the old schist a conspicuous ripple-mark is displayed.'

Nobody who had not either visited the Siccar Point itself, or some other place where the same rocks were to be seen, could possibly appreciate the fidelity of the painter in his colouring of the red sandstone and the 'light fawn-coloured vertical schists.' Not having seen the painting we cannot affirm that it possessed what artists call good colour, the 'eye-music' of contrasts and harmonies, but we may conclude that it was rather a faithful map of natural hues than an artistic colour-arrangement. With regard to other artistic merits we may be certain from the engraving, that there was neither an arrangement of light and shade nor any artistic composition, so that the one merit of the work would be its fidelity, and that only geologists could appreciate.

The colouring of the Siccar Point, though remarkable and possibly even beautiful, is of a comparatively mild kind, but there are some places in the world where it is so strong and so peculiar that if truly painted it would attract attention almost exclusively to itself, and everybody who looked at the picture (except some geologist who knew the place) would exclaim, 'Can such colouring possibly be true?' thus losing aesthetic pleasure in pure wonderment. Imagine, for example, a faithful painting of the stratification which is to be found for many a league along the Colorado river, and which has been described as follows by Mr. Archibald Geikie:*—

'The colours of these rocks are of the most vivid hues. Bands of brilliant red are relieved by others of dull-chocolate brown deepening into purple or fading into slate and lavender. Some of the beds are of a pale lemon-yellow, shading into orange or brown or into a delicate pearl-grey, with here and there perhaps a seam of pale verdigris-green. As these tints characterise different layers of rock, the level stratification of the country, thus so clearly marked off, is one of the most striking features in the scenery.'

What with brilliant red, pale lemon-yellow, orange, lavender, and verdigris-green, with dull chocolate brown to make the bright colours look brighter still, it is plain that in a faithful picture of such a scene the local colours would be so dominant as to overrule all colour in the artistic sense. So it must be on that astonishing Yellow-stone River in the National Park of the United States, where the bright yellow colour of the strata has given a name to the stream.

* In the valuable paper on Rivers and River Gorges in *The English Illustrated Magazine*, for January 1884.

In Mr. J. F. Campbell's eccentric but very interesting book on the powers of *Frost and Fire* there are many illustrations drawn from the geologist's point of view. Let us select one of the most pictorial of these for analysis. It represents a scene in northern Scandinavia at a place called Quain Clubbe. There is a fine waterfall in the middle distance, and beyond it a succession of rocks and hills, culminating in two mountains. The river rushes down the foreground, clasping an island in its embrace, but the great peculiarity of the foreground, and the reason why the subject was selected for illustration, consist in certain grass-grown terraces of drift. No doubt the drawing is like nature, but it has all the appearance of representing something artificial. The terraces of drift look exactly like embankments made by some railway constructor, or like material delivered from waggons in a mine, and taking a regular slope. Such a subject would, therefore, be entirely unfit for treatment in a picture, because it would require explanation. The same objection would apply to the famous marks on mountain sides that are called 'The Parallel Roads of Glen Roy.' I have never seen them, but they are described as follows by Mr. Archibald Geikie:—

'Returning now to Glen Roy, the traveller should ascend that valley to see what light its famous "Parallel Roads" have to cast upon the history of the old glaciers of the Highlands. The same long straight line which, as he drew near to the Bridge of Roy, he noticed running high along the mountain-side, on the south of the Spean Valley is now seen to turn up Glen Roy, winding along the hills of that valley with the same singular horizontality. When he gets several miles up the glen he begins to see traces of two other terraces, until, on reaching a turn of the road, the long deep glen lies before him, with its three bars straight and distinct as if they had been drawn with a ruler, yet winding into all the recesses of the steep slopes, and coming out again over the projecting parts without ever deviating from their parallelism. The "Roads," so long a subject of wonderment and legendary story among the Highlanders, and for so many years a source of sore perplexity among men of science, seem at last to be understood. Each of them is a shelf or terrace, cut by the shore waters of a lake that once filled Glen Roy. The highest is of course the oldest, and those beneath it were formed in succession, as the waters of the lake were lowered.'

Mr. James Geikie, in *The Great Ice Age*, has an interesting paragraph on the same subject which explains the probable cause of the ancient lake:—

'In Glen Roy there are three distinct shelves, 856 ft., 1065 ft., and 1149 ft. respectively above the level of the sea. At one time these shelves were thought to be old sea-beaches, and this continued to be the general belief even after Agassiz had suggested their lacustrine origin. The later observations of Mr. Jamieson, however, would seem to have convinced most geologists at last that the glacial-lake theory is the true explanation of the phenomena. A massive glacier descend-

ing from Glen Treig filled up Glen Spean, and thus formed a barrier to the escape of the water from Glen Roy. Along the margins of the lake thus formed angular shingle and *débris* collected—derived in great measure, no doubt, from the degradation of the rocks under the influence of frost. As the icy barrier decreased, either by gradual melting or by sudden rupture, the lake was lowered, and thus another terrace of *débris* gathered along the slope of the valley at a lower level than the former. The further shrinking or bursting of the ice in like manner again lowered the lake, and so gave rise to the third and lowest shelf.'

It appears to be quite settled now that the 'parallel roads' are in fact the shore-marks of an ancient lake, and all belief in their marine origin is abandoned. But it is impossible to suppose the lake without supposing a barrier of ice lasting all the year round, as there is no evidence of any rocky dam to the supposed lake, and no human being would ever imagine a state of climate in which glacier ice was permanent in Scotland, unless he had been taught by geologists. Hence it follows that a truthful picture of Glen Roy, representing the 'parallel roads,' could only be properly addressed to that small portion of mankind which is familiar with glacial theories, seeing that for other people they would be nothing but a distracting puzzle, preventing them from enjoying the landscape by causing hopelessly wrong speculations about their natural or artificial origin. This brings us to the irresistible conclusion that in a painting of Glen Roy intended for artistic purposes, that is to give aesthetic pleasure, and not for the scientific purpose of conveying accurate information, the marks of the ancient lake shores ought to be intentionally and deliberately omitted, although there can be no doubt that for anyone capable of understanding their history they are the most interesting features of the landscape.

Another natural fact that is absolutely inexplicable without the aid of geological science is the existence of erratic blocks, pieces of stone, 'of all shapes and sizes, occasionally reaching colossal proportions and containing many hundred cubic feet.' The most remarkable peculiarity of erratics is that they are often entirely different, in their mineral constitution, from the ground on which they have found a resting-place. Pieces of rock belonging to the Alps have been carried across to the Jura, or down the way towards Lyons. In the basin of Belley, on the line of the great ancient Rhone glacier, there is still to be seen a big erratic block of what French geologists call *phyllade noire* (black clay-slate). Only about half of it now remains, but that half contains four hundred cubic metres.* Other great pieces of the same rock are

* *Esquisse Géologique du Terrain Erratique et des anciens Glaciers de la Région Centrale du Bassin du Rhone.* Par A. Falsan. Lyon, 1883.

found in different situations. Now suppose the case of some artist who sits down to paint a scene in which blocks of this kind occur. How is it likely that they can be in harmony with the geology of the place? Their presence is nothing but an accident. They were brought by a glacier long ago, and deposited with no more intention than a sack that drops from a cart and is left in the middle of a road, and they have scarcely any nearer relation to their resting-place than the sack could have to the macadam. They are excessively interesting things to a geological student, and such a student would make very careful drawings of them; but a painter who had any regard to the unity of his subject, and to the necessity for avoiding problems that require explanation, had better simply omit them. They are not like passengers' trunks on a railway platform, they do not themselves explain the reason for their presence—to explain that we have to go back to the glacial epoch, exactly as for the parallel roads of Glen Roy, and who but a geologist knows anything about that?

An argument of this kind might be prolonged indefinitely, for there are a thousand instances of things in nature that are sufficiently remarkable to look strange and even untrue in art, and absolutely to require some explanation. In nature we know that there cannot be untruth, a thing is what it is beyond the possibility of discussion; but in art all unfamiliar truth, all truth not easily and at once accounted for, is a fatal obstacle to the reception of the work. Nor is it necessary to go so far as the Colorado or the Yellowstone Rivers to find examples of strange and unacceptable truth. On every sheet of water in the world certain phenomena, such as those of local breezes, isolated areas of calm, interrupted reflections, and the like, are of very frequent occurrence; and yet these phenomena are stumbling-blocks to most people in art because they do not notice them in nature. For the same reason many forms of cloud that occur commonly enough in the natural sky look strange and eccentric in pictures, and are enough to prevent their sale. Still, if we follow the history of landscape-painting from its first existence as a separate art down to our own time, we shall find that its progress, or if you like better the course of its history, has been marked by a constant extension of its domain in the realm of nature. The opening of the natural world by science has been followed by the illustration of it in art, not to the same extent, and yet to an extent that would have appeared heretical and unintelligible to the criticism of the last century. The tendency to consider a landscape absurd because it represents truthfully something that has never been painted by the old masters has greatly

diminished in the course of our own life-time, and the reason appears to be that people are made better acquainted with natural truth by the positive and uncompromising statements of men of science, and by the personal study of nature that they encourage. In this way it is gradually coming to pass that a vast number of natural facts or phenomena, which in the days of Wilson and Gainsborough were really outside of the domain of art because unfamiliar to the public — art dealing properly only with the familiar—may be considered really within it because they have lost the fatal defect of strangeness. This will be understood more perfectly by reference to a special case, the scenery enclosed in the great National Park of the United States. That scenery is extraordinary in various ways, but as it becomes more and more familiar to the inhabitants of the States, and to visitors from foreign countries, the pictures of it that will be produced by faithful artists studying on the spot, will, in course of time, cease to appear strange, and then people will be able to appreciate the beauty of the region simply, without thinking so much about it as a region of natural curiosities, and so, by increased familiarity, it will become a suitable field for art.

Those who love landscape only for its beauty, poets and painters who have much sentiment but little positive knowledge, often have a dread of knowledge as being destructive of sentiment, and the reader may remember that Mr. Ruskin gives an excellent instance of this possibility in a matter belonging to our present subject, the emergence of rocks from the soil. To one who only thinks of rock when he sees it, or when he remembers what he has actually seen, it may appear far more wonderful, astonishing, awful, than it is likely to appear to a geologist who is mentally quite familiar with it already as it exists in beds under some uninteresting tract of country. It is probable that the extreme mental familiarity with rocks of different kinds which is the result of a geological education must take away much of that impressionableness which belongs to ignorance and inexperience. We may go farther and say that to a simple mind which believes a precipice to be God's handiwork, as directly and immediately as a wall is human handiwork, it must appear far more sublime and overwhelming, and a far more striking manifestation of divine power, than it is likely to appear to a geologist who sees in it nothing but some conveniently exposed strata, whose lines and curves he will immediately proceed to account for by vertical or lateral pressure. In this way science may sometimes deprive us of the opportunity for noble emotion; but any loss that it occasions is compensated for by the great additional interest given to landscape

through speculations on its past history. Some of these speculations may be of doubtful probability; but many others have reached the stage of certainty, through the accumulation of material evidence in their favour. An hypothesis is suggested, it is applied to all known cases and found compatible with all known facts, after which probation it is accepted. I may illustrate the wonderful increase of interest that geology has given to landscape by a special subject which has long been to me one of the most fascinating and perplexing of natural puzzles, the formation of lake basins. The whole subject has been treated with the fulness that it deserves in Mr. James Geikie's admirable book *The Great Ice Age*. He divides the lakes of Scotland into three classes: 1. Lakes occupying hollows in the till or other superficial deposits; 2. Morainic or drift-dammed lakes; 3. Lakes resting in basins of solid rock. 'The third group,' he says, 'embraces the largest and most important lakes in Scotland, and to it also belong a vast number of mountain-tarns which are neither large nor important. All these lakes and tarns rest in hollows of solid rock.' I will confine myself in this place to the rock-basins concerning which the first question that obviously suggests itself is — how can they have been hollowed? Here are some of the difficulties that perplexed us in former times :—

'When we reflect for a moment we shall find that it is a very hard thing indeed to account for a rock-basin. The usual agents of erosion, those which we see at work in our own country, fail to afford any solution of the problem. We may, for example, dismiss the sea as utterly inadequate. The action of the sea upon the land is that of a huge horizontal saw; the cliffs are eaten into and gradually undermined; masses of rock, loosened by rains and frosts, tumble down and are pounded up by the breakers into shingle and sand. Thus in process of time a shelf or terrace of erosion is formed, and were the shore to be sufficiently elevated to-morrow, we should find that such a platform would extend all along our rocky coast-line—narrowing where the rocks were hard and durable, broadening out where the cliffs had yielded more easily to the ceaseless gnawing of the waves. But nowhere should we be able to detect anything approaching to the character of a rock-basin; for it is evident that the sea "cannot make a hollow below its own average level." Its tendency, indeed, is quite in the opposite direction—much of the material derived from the denudation of the land being carried out and deposited in its quiet depths.'

The question then arises, whether rock-basins can be accounted for by the action of rivers, but it is readily shown that although a river will run down a slope it will not run up an inclined plane. Rock-basins are scooped out by waterfalls, but you cannot account for a great lake-basin by a supposed waterfall of sufficient volume.

The next suggestion is that rock-basins may possibly be due to dis-

turbances of strata that have made troughs. 'May not the lakes then occupy such troughs, or rest in cracks and chasms or depressions caused by dislocation and displacement of the rocks?' The notion that rock-basins are formed of strata bent upwards at the sides like a dish is disproved by the fact that they are quite independent of the depressions in stratification. 'As a general rule we find that synclinal troughs or geological hollows form hills, while conversely anticlinal ridges or geological hills give rise to valleys. And it not infrequently happens that the hollow in which a lake lies is, geologically speaking, a hill or anticline.' It may be necessary to give some further explanation of this for the non-scientific reader. What Mr. Geikie means is that the strata may have a convex curve, may round their backs, as it were, at the bottom of what is popularly called a valley (and so be exactly in the opposite condition to a dish unless you turn it upside down), whilst on the top of what we call a hill the strata may be concave. As for synclinal troughs, that is, rock-basins in conformity with the concave lying of the strata, like the top saucer of several in a pile, Mr. Geikie simply affirms that there is not such a thing in Scotland, and Professor Ramsay says that they are the rarest things in nature. Neither do the lakes lie in 'gaping fissures, or in chasms produced by dislocations of the solid rocks, or, as they are technically termed, *faults*. As a matter of fact, no single instance has yet been adduced, either at home or abroad, where a fault could be said to be the proximate cause of a lake hollow.'

The remaining hypothesis is that rock-basins must have been hollowed out by *ice*, and Professor Ramsay has been the first to put the argument in favour of ice with all its irresistible power. The strongest point of his argument is that if a glacier were the agent it would naturally have a more powerful erosive action towards the upper end of a valley where its thickness would be greatest, and in accordance with this theory we find that the rock-basis now converted into lakes are deepest at the place where the ice of the ancient glacier must have been thickest and heaviest. As the glacier 'continues to flow it gradually loses in bulk, its rate of motion at the same time diminishes, and thus its erosive power becomes weaker and weaker. The result of all this is the formation of a rock-basin, the deeper portion of which lies towards the upper end, just where the grinding force of the glacier is greatest.'

With this idea to guide us we may presume that our Scottish rock-basins will generally be deepest at their upper ends, or, in other words, towards those ends that would be higher up the flow of the ancient glacier, and so we always find them. The theory is confirmed in other

ways, especially by the existence of two or more basins in the same valley, which are exactly hollowed as they must have been under the hypothesis of glacier action.

'An attentive examination of the physical features of the fiords, and a careful scrutiny of the Admiralty charts, will show that whenever the opposite shores of a fiord approach each other so as well-nigh to separate the water into two separate sheets, two distinct rock-basins are almost invariably the result. This appearance is well explained by the erosion theory, but is inexplicable otherwise. When glacier ice filled such a fiord, it would be strangled in the narrow pass, and the motion of the ice advancing from behind would be impeded. Hence there would be a heaping up of the glacier, and intensified pressure upon the rocky bed would produce its natural effect—increased erosion.'*

This theory of glacial action seems to be the only acceptable explanation of Scottish rock-basins, and a striking confirmation of it is the shape, well ascertained by soundings, of those rock-basins which have been invaded by the sea, and which have their deepest parts where the glacier would be heaviest, their shallowest where it would be lightest and their rims or edges of rock exactly like the present freshwater basins, although the rims may be now submerged beneath the salt water, and known to us only by the Admiralty charts.

For the knowledge of all these details, or at least for the due sense of their significance, we are entirely indebted to the scientific geologists, and especially to Professor Ramsay and the Geikies. Before they investigated the subject for us we fancied that the rock-basins were mere depressions, resulting from early disturbances of the earth's surface, or perhaps from slow subsidence afterwards, in the case of each particular lake, an idea now shown to be perfectly untenable, as 'to have produced the innumerable lakes of all sizes that stud the surface of alpine countries and many northern regions the rocky crust of the earth must needs have been nearly as unresisting as putty.' And now, is it not plainly evident that every lake which occupies a true rock-basin in Scotland or elsewhere gains immensely by being for ever associated with the tremendous grinding and scraping power of an ancient glacier and by the enormous lapse of time, of which, however, we may have some faint appreciation, that must have been needed by the slowly moving glaciers that hollowed out the dark depths of Loch Lomond and Loch Awe? To me it seems that a number of the most sublime and impressive ideas of natural action are connected with history of these lakes. We know that they are of great antiquity in comparison with any human work, and yet their antiquity is not so immeasurable as to discourage us by

* *The Great Ice Age.* Chapter xxiii., Rock-basins of Scotland.

the absence of a beginning. Having seen those remnants of the ancient glaciers that are still at work in Europe, we may imagine the far vaster glaciers of 'The Great Ice Age,' and see them at work in the valleys where now sleep the beautiful waters that we love, waters that are only frozen in our sharpest winters in their shallower creeks or bays, waters that reflect many a tree and plant that would have perished in the ancient Arctic cold, and are often cheered by the presence of human and animal life impossible in the ancient desolation. Surely the stupendous truths that we have learned from science have in this instance (and in how many others!) increased and intensified the interest that an intelligent man may take in the landscapes that he knows! The beauty of them as they are to-day is not diminished, but much enhanced, by the contrast with the stern past that endured so long—long enough for such prodigious labours to be accomplished by such slow means—and yet that dreary past was a necessary preparation for the beautiful present, when the artist sits in summer on a smooth rock polished by the ancient glacier, and paints the lake asleep in the hollow that it made.

CHAPTER XIX.

Of High Places.

WHENEVER a subject belongs so strictly to the domain of science as the structure of mountains does, it is excessively difficult to treat it otherwise than in a strictly scientific manner, and the reader is probably as little prepared to listen to a geological lecture in these pages as I am to deliver one. This need not prevent us from remembering what the professional geologists tell us, so far as we are able to follow them, but my own purpose will be sufficiently answered if I am able to recall to the experienced reader the freshness of the sensations that he has felt in the high places of the earth, and convey to the inexperienced some faint idea of those delights, for the enjoyment of which not a few have hazarded, and even sacrificed their lives.

Perhaps, before going farther, it may be well to consider briefly the disputed question of right and wrong in this matter. Is the pursuit of mountaineering perfectly blameless, or is it a foolhardy form of enterprise that a moralist ought to condemn? There are two things to be considered, the danger of the ascent itself for average climbers, and the degree in which the general danger is diminished in particular cases by the strength, skill, and experience of the climber who makes the ascent. It is extremely difficult to determine what is the degree of general dangerousness in anything. It varies from people to people, and from age to age, according to the development of human aptitude. Personal skill and coolness may make a situation safe for one man when it is perilous for all others. On the other hand, a particular weakness or disease may make the most insignificant enterprise unsafe. It is imprudent for a person with heart-disease to climb a Surrey hill; it is an almost perfectly safe amusement for Mr. Whymper to go to the summit of Mont Blanc. An old friend of mine said to me as we were looking at a little open sailing-boat with which he had safely navigated the most dangerous lakes in Europe: 'How relative safety is! that little craft is safe for us, but what madness it would be for an inexperienced person to embark in her!' Foolhardiness does not consist so much in putting ourselves in what may be generally considered dangerous situations as in over-estimating our own strength, skill, resources, and presence of

mind. Sometimes, too, it may consist in associating ourselves with incapable or less capable people, who create danger by their own deficiency of skill. There are, however, Alpine enterprises of such extreme temerity that the most accomplished guides themselves are in real peril, and then it becomes a question how far it is right to risk valuable lives for the celebrity that rewards the conqueror of some peak hitherto reputed inaccessible. In the terrible accident which will for ever be associated in the history of Alpine enterprise with the first ascent of the Matterhorn, Michel Croz, one of the bravest, coolest, strongest, and most active men in Europe, was hurled into eternity simply because (to quote the words of his employer, who witnessed the catastrophe), 'Mr. Hadow slipped, fell against him, and knocked him over.' *

To this it might be answered that the courage, coolness, strength, and activity that distinguished the unfortunate Michel Croz, are never developed in any human being without the full reality of danger, that these are flowers of manly character which never yet grew in the atmosphere of a safe and quiet life, and that it may be better for mankind that some men should attain that degree of hardihood and perish by some sudden catastrophe than that all men should fall far short of it and die of languor in their beds. Mountaineering requires as much courage as war, and a more skilful activity, whilst it has this great advantage over the battlefield that the peril may *generally* be neutralised by prudence. The reader sees that my sympathies are very much with the mountaineers, and indeed my admiration for their achievements is only equalled by regret when any serious accident befalls them. Mr. Whymper calls mountaineering 'the purest, healthiest, and most manly of sports.' It is, indeed, quite absolutely dissociated from all degrading sensual pleasures, since they are incompatible with it, nor does it involve suffering of any one of the inferior creatures. Mr. Whymper is eloquent in its favour, and speaks from an enviable experience :—

'We who go mountain-scrambling have constantly set before us the superiority of fixed purpose or perseverance to brute force. We know that each height, each step, must be gained by patient, laborious toil, and that wishing cannot take the place of working ; we know the benefits of mutual aid ; that many a difficulty must be encountered, and many an obstacle must be grappled with or turned, but we

* Mr. Whymper is careful to tell us that Mr. Hadow slipped at a relatively easy part of the descent, and that Croz could have saved himself if he had suspected that anything was about to occur by clutching a rock that was near him, or that he would have stopped himself if he had not been momentarily without his hatchet. This only shows the extreme peril of what a mountaineer considers really difficult places.

know that where there's a will there's a way: and we come back to our daily occupations better fitted to fight the daily battle of life, and to overcome the impediments which obstruct our paths, strengthened and cheered by the recollection of past labours, and by the memory of victories gained in other fields.

'We glory in the physical regeneration which is the product of our exertions; we exult over the grandeur of the scenes that are brought before our eyes, the splendours of sunrise and sunset, and the beauties of hill, dale, lake, wood, and waterfall; but we value more highly the development of manliness, and the evolution, under combat with difficulties, of those noble qualities of human nature—courage, patience, endurance, and fortitude.'

The beginning of all mountaineering is simply the desire that we all feel to get to the top of some small eminence in order to have a better view. Then we see some loftier hill, and think 'If we were there the prospect would be wider still;' and after a few ascents of hills or inferior mountains in youth we arrive at a state of feeling on the subject that makes it intolerable to live in the neighbourhood of a mountain without having at least once ascended it. This state of mind is familiar, no doubt, to many of my readers, and is, I believe, a very common state of mind amongst healthy and active people. If such people happen to live near a mountain of some elevation and difficulty they will become tolerable mountaineers through the teaching of that single height. After that, if they have a genius for mountaineering, a new ambition is likely to implant itself in their souls. They will not be satisfied with the near and the familiar, but will travel to seek loftier and more difficult elevations. Then they will compare themselves with the *élite* of the climbers of the world, and strive to conquer peaks reputed to be inaccessible. After that Europe itself will not hold them, but wherever a virgin Alp may rear its head in northern or southern skies, there they will arrive with axes, ropes, and alpenstocks and wound its untrodden snows with the nails of their English boots.

It will be a natural course of proceeding to advance gradually from the humblest to the loftiest hills; and here let me observe that the rewarding nature of an ascent is not so much to be measured by the actual height of the mountain as by its relation to the surrounding landscape. Very humble hills, indeed, may be well worth climbing if the prospect is clear on two or three sides of them, and especially if it is of a varied character, whilst lofty mountains may be overlooked by others still loftier, and the view from them may be blocked by near scenery of a monotonous kind, so that the ascent is scarcely rewarded by anything but physical exercise and opportunities for geological observation. Besides this, the beauty of scenery does not increase with the elevation of the

spectator, neither does the feeling of elevation itself augment in any proportionate degree. All landscape painters are familiar with the fact that the higher you go the less pictorial does the landscape become, but it is not necessary to confine ourselves to the landscape-painter's point of view, we are thinking about nature just at present, independently of the fine arts. Even with this larger liberty of judgment we are still obliged to confess that if by climbing higher we are always gaining, we are as constantly and steadily losing beauty of some kind in our ascent. We see high mountains better from another mountain, but the inferior elevations flatten themselves before us as we rise. A still greater loss is the difficulty of seeing distances framed, as it were, by side-scenes. Such an arrangement, with side-scenes, has always been felt to be necessary, not in landscape-painting only, but also in the theatre and in the arrangement of gardens, and if any one finds fault with me for referring to such artificial things as these I may readily answer that the needs of the human mind are most clearly revealed when it is free to manage things as it likes best. Now, the higher you go up a mountain the less chance you have of getting a vista pleasantly enclosed, and when finally you come to stand upon some isolated peak you can have no side scene whatever, but see nature as if you were a hovering kestrel, or an aeronaut suspended from a balloon.

I should say, then, that the pleasure of ascending high mountains is much less of an artistic than of a physical and even moral nature. The physical pleasure is in the use of fine bodily powers with the profoundly satisfactory feeling that we are increasing them, the moral pleasure lies in the close analogy, which all men more or less distinctly feel, between the physical efforts needed for a mountain ascent and the moral effort needed for the attainment of a higher life. Even the poorer purposes of a worldly ambition are analogous to the climbing of mountains, as we know by many a current phrase referring to high places in which people have been born, or to which they have been clever enough to climb.

These analogies are so familiar that it is needless to pursue them, and we may return at once to our minor hills. First, let us not despise them for their moderate elevation. The humblest of them are as high as a cathedral, and I never in my life felt the sense of being perched up aloft so completely as in the spire at Amiens, where you look down on the steep slope of the prodigious roof, and see the people like little black flies far down in the streets below. The feeling of possible danger in such a place is almost as complete as it could be on the peak

of the Matterhorn itself, for if you fell upon that roof you might try to cling just as vainly as did poor Michel Croz, and your body, a second or two later, would be as lifeless as his own. There is nothing to choose, as to degrees of peril, between a fall of three hundred feet and three thousand. This must be the reason why the inferior hills, if they are only steep enough, awaken our feelings of sublimity almost as effectually as the colossal mountains. Even without any real peril of crag or precipice a minor hill may have some energy of outline, and offer, on a small scale, the varieties of an interesting ascent. There is a hill in the Morvan called *Bonnet Vert*, because there is a little cap of brushwood on the top of it, and I do not know a better example of a minor hill anywhere. It is about three times the height of the roof of Amiens, or six hundred feet above the surrounding country. To ascend it you have first a path through a wood which conceals the latter half of your task, then you emerge upon a little plateau of cultivated land, and see the dome that is set upon it and which you have to climb at the cost of a little real exertion. As soon as you have emerged from the wood the broad basin of the *Autunois* stretches away far below you till it is bounded by its distant hills, and once on the summit you look down into narrow vales where villages and chateaux lie nestling. To the west you have Mont Beuvray rising alone and wooded to the summit, to the south the long, monotonous line of wooded *Montagnes de Montjeu*, with a park on their plateau and a towered city at their feet, whilst far to the east the landscape recedes to a remote horizon, and you may possibly, if rain is impending, catch a glimpse of the snows of Mont Blanc. There is some trace of human labour on the crest where you are standing, and you are told that in the earlier part of the century a semaphore telegraph was established there which repeated the signals from another post across the wide basin or plain, and was a link in the chain of telegraphic posts between Marseilles and Paris. The perfection of this little hill is due to the boldness of its form, the beauty of its curved lines, the steepness of the ascent, and to its position as an advanced post towards the plain, so that nothing interferes with the view which is one of the finest in France amongst those that do not rise to the sublime. It is almost amusing to see how the appurtenances of grander hills are imitated here. There is a beautiful valley at the foot on the very smallest scale, but with noble and ancient trees.

I have mentioned Mont Beuvray, and am tempted to describe it as being the most perfect of the minor hills that are very familiarly known to me. The mount stands isolated on the outskirts of the Morvan

hills, and is about two thousand feet above the level of the surrounding country.* The sides are steep, but there are no precipices, the summit is a small level plateau and to the west there is a deep gorge with a stream. On the east another rivulet flows down a little dell, and even just under the summit itself the ground is well watered with abundant springs that seem almost iced in the hot weather. Nearly all the sides of the mount are clothed with dense forest of oak, beech, sycamore, &c., and winding about this forest are sixteen miles of road for the ox-carts that fetch the cuttings of the wood. The crest was occupied in Gaulish times by a great oppidum, or fortified city of refuge, and the fortifications are still easily traceable in a circle at some distance below the summit where the hill is about two miles and a half in circumference. Within this circle the remains of many dwellings have been brought to light, amongst the rest a large Gallo-Roman mansion a little lower than the plateau.† The *plateau* itself is crowned with ancient beeches, and the rising, undulating land all about the foot of the mount is exactly suited to the chestnut, of which there are still many noble old specimens. From the summit of the mount the views range in the most favourable weather from the Loire in the west to Mont Blanc in the opposite direction. The western view is the finer, especially on account of the well-formed lower masses of the mount itself covered with dense wood and ending in a beautiful vale which has its castle on a rocky height. Beyond this the hill energy finally dies away in gentle waves, that perish in the great plain of the Loire, and across this plain itself in clear weather may be faintly seen other distant elevations. At sunset the Loire gleams and glistens in the blue of the misty plain. The reader must imagine for himself the infinite detail of a thousand fields and many a league of forest.

I have often rather envied the opulent Roman who had his palace on that height, and have indeed imitated him in a very humble way by living, for days together, in a thatched cottage‡ built of the good granite of the mount and close to the foundations of his residence. From early dawn till after sunset I enjoyed, with a companion fully alive to such influences, the peculiar feeling of being isolated from the world, and yet seeing more of it than those who are not isolated, a feeling only to be experienced on an eminence. The little plateau was like an island in

* Seen from the west it is higher, and from the east a little lower than the measure given above. The summit is 2722 feet above the sea.

† See page 39 of the present work.

‡ Built for the use of a learned antiquary, M. Bulliot, who for many years directed the excavations on the site of the Gaulish oppidum.

the air, like Gulliver's Laputa. When the plain was hidden in mist our hill-top seemed to be floating in the infinite, but it was never grander than in the moonlight when the world below was still dimly visible, stretching away to an indefinite horizon, and nothing could be distinctly seen but a light in some distant farm or the glistening of the moonlight on a small lake that nestled in one of the valleys. In the daytime we had many a change to note from the dewy dawn to the fierce heat of summer noon. If the hill had been sterile and dry the heat would have been scarcely supportable; but with our noble groves of beech and other trees, our natural lawns of soft, well-shaded grass, and our delightful wells of purest water, always abundant, always cold, we felt ourselves in a summer paradise according to the taste of Virgil or Ariosto. No sound ever disturbed us except the songs of birds or the wind in the leaves of the forest; and though we knew that there were wild boars in its recesses, they troubled us no more than the timid deer, and only added a little to the poetry of the sylvan world that surrounded us. It was a place wherein to read the old poets, a place where, after reading them, one might believe it not quite impossible to meet Adonis hunting in the forest or to come—

> 'Unto the place, where living free from blame
> Chiron the old roamed through the oaken wood.'

At other times the imagination might yield itself to influences of a later date. We often walked out in the middle of the night, and then, when the wind came from the west, and the leaves rustled, we remembered the legend that a seigneur of the castle on the rock still hunts in ghostly fashion with ghostly dogs, and comes up from his old home with the chill night-blast and cheers his hounds across the plateau. Swiftly they pass, and soon are lost in the dark descending slopes of the forest on the other side.

Now, for a contrast, let me take the reader to one of our northern hills, my old friend Pendle. It is much lower than the Beuvray, lower by about nine hundred feet; but there are no groves upon it for shade or shelter. The cold winds blow from one end to the other unimpeded; nothing except a cloud ever relieves the severe monotony of its outline. Some hills give the idea of being erect; but Pendle is a great recumbent mass, something like a sphinx, and the wind blows all along its back, a desolate range of wild and dreary moorland. One end of it (the breast of the sphinx) is exceedingly steep, but not an inaccessible precipice, the other slopes down to the level of a mere undulation of the land.

Pendle Hill, from the Moors behind Hurstwood, Lancashire. *This is given merely to show the quality of undulating line in the Lancashire Hills, and to make this clearer the outline has been drawn firmly, almost without shading.*

Mount Beuvray *as seen on a very clear day at a distance of twelve miles. The darkly-shaded portion on the summit is a fine grove of ancient beech-trees.*

Seen from the top of Pendle the surface of Lancashire presents the appearance, not of a country tossed into crested waves, but of a country with a long ground-swell rising and falling in great spaces and with slow curves, not without a certain severe beauty of outline, yet which cannot be described as picturesque. On the Yorkshire side the forms of Pennyghent and Ingleborough are more decided; and to the north in clear weather may be seen the mountains of the Lake District, whilst a long line of silvery sea glistens under the afternoon sun. This is interesting as a view, but what an immense difference has been produced in the pleasantness of elevated ground, in its adaptability to the needs of man, by the six and a half degrees of latitude that separate Pendle from the Beuvray! The southern mount has shady groves like Ida, and like Ida is 'many-fountained,' the northern is bare and bleak, recalling no classic association. I fear it must be admitted that Pendle is unfortunate in having neither southern richness nor the full and stern sublimity of the north. Skiddaw is as wild as a Highland Ben, and, though little more than three thousand feet high, is full of small sublimities which are impressive in the absence of larger. We may smile at Wordsworth's patriotic contention that Skiddaw is 'nobler far' than Parnassus, and 'pours forth streams more sweet than Castaly;' but however this may be, it is a fine bold specimen of the inferior mountains, and offers a view of much diversity, with the delightful little Derwentwater in the immediate neighbourhood, almost all the summits of the Lake District in the distance, and some Scotch hills across the Solway, not to mention the Isle of Man and a possibility of seeing Ireland.

In ascending our little British mountains it is wise to start about midnight, so as to get the powerful contrast between the mystery of darkness, and the splendour of sunrise over a great expanse of country. The gradual passage from one to the other, however frequently we may have witnessed it, is never commonplace or familiar. The poetic effect of such an ascent is greatly enhanced if you have to cross a lake in the darkness before beginning it, as for example when you ascend Ben Cruachan from the Cladich shore of Loch Awe, or Ben Lomond from Tarbet. The night should be as dark as possible, and you should be either entirely alone in the boat, or accompanied by a single silent companion. I remember crossing in this way from Tarbet to the foot of Ben Lomond at midnight when it was impossible to see the opposite shore (though the distance is less than a mile) until a moment before we landed there was a feeble glimmer of white pebbles, and the boat scraped on the beach. The eerie effect of such a midnight row in a

small boat is considerably enhanced when you know that you have five hundred feet of black water under you, and that you are in one of those narrow gorges that may be swept from end to end in the most unexpected manner by a sudden squall from the mountains. After landing, you have a toilsome climb that raises you about a thousand feet, then an easier walk over a barren moor, and after that generally a steep ascent to the summit during which you have the encouragement of slowly brightening light. The common desire to see the sun rise from the top of a mountain is reasonable because the landscape changes more rapidly than it usually does at other hours, and because you see enough of the earth to be impressed by the grandeur of its majestic eastward motion. Besides this you have the spectacle of shadows thrown on a large scale, and though we are perfectly accustomed to see shadows of smaller objects, such as trees and houses, we cannot help feeling overawed by the great scale of Nature when the shadows of lofty mountains are cast across broad valleys and the lakes lie cold in the hollows, whilst many a rocky crest is golden or ruddy in the first bright rays of morning. Ben Lomond is perhaps the best of all the British hills for the enjoyment of this great spectacle, as the mountains visible from it are well disposed for the casting of the first shadows, and the view of Loch Lomond with all its islands is incomparably beautiful. You have the Clyde, too, beyond Dumbarton Rock, and Bute pale in the distance, and in the other direction Loch Katrine and the beginning of the Forth.

Ben Cruachan is the best of the British mountains that are known to me familiarly, both by the sharpness of its rocky crests and the wild character of its remarkable corrie. What we call a corrie in Scotland (I may explain for the southern reader) is a hollow in the mountain itself presenting all the appearance of an ordinary valley or dell, except that it is enclosed on all sides but the open one by which its waters issue. If that opening is not cut low enough to drain the hollow completely the consequence is a mountain-lake or tarn of which there are many examples. In the corrie of Cruachan there is only a stream which winds along the green bottom of the hollow as quietly as if it were in the English midlands, and then tumbles into a rocky ravine through which it passes by a succession of pools and cataracts, mostly hidden by dense foliage, to the lake. I have never seen a painting of the corrie, and think it likely that the most faithful representation of it would be a disappointment, because the romantic character of the place itself is due in great measure to our knowledge of its height above the lake, and

the difficulty of getting to it, which painting could not explain, but it might give a truthful idea of the inaccessible purple-grey precipices to the north and the ruddier steep of the great peak in whose hollow lies in summer a diminishing field of snow. The view from the peak includes Loch Awe on one side of the Cruachan range and Loch Etive on the other, neither of them exactly an equivalent for Loch Lomond, an inferiority soon forgotten when the eye ranges westward to the Hebrides, and to the north and east over the sea of mountains that are the Highlands. The narrow summits of Ben Lomond and Ben Cruachan are better observatories for landscape than the flat and rather extensive table-land of Ben Nevis, as you have only to turn round like a weather-cock to see everything, which is the convenience we go to find on 'the peaks of earth o'er-gazing mountains.' The views we get from such places are not pictorial landscapes but panoramas; they are, however, as much a part of nature as those narrower and better enclosed views which have a nearer relationship to artistic compositions, and they may have other kinds of interest than mere adaptability to art. It is, I think, especially interesting to watch meteorological changes over a vast extent of country, to see one region obscured and another brought into light, to see rain and storm on one part of the country and the most brilliant weather elsewhere. Even the dreaded approach of the mountain cloud is not always a misfortune, as it may happen that the peak we stand upon rises clear of it, in which case we may have the remarkable spectacle of the great cloud ocean, out of which the mountain-tops rise like islands; and then it becomes difficult to believe that the human race is living at the bottom of that sea, or that we ourselves could not sail upon it from one rocky island to another. Even buildings may sometimes be isolated in that manner. The Cathedral of Autun has a tall spire that stands on elevated land; but just behind it are the steep slopes of Montjeu, and it sometimes happens, especially on autumnal mornings, that people walking on the zig-zag road called 'les rampes,' which ascends those slopes, have a strange spectacle before them. The basin of Autun, including the city, is entirely flooded by a lake of level cloud, out of which the distant hills emerge, like the shores of Windermere above its waters. Nothing of the city is visible, nothing of the cathedral, except only the spire which rises in the clear air like an obelisk on the Egyptian plain in the most absolute apparent isolation.

To return to our Highland mountains. Their barrenness is against their beauty; they would certainly be more delightful with glades of ancient chestnuts and soft natural lawns of verdure than with nothing

but bog and moor after the first low belt of stunted oak and birch. Those mountains in the western islands that are continually exposed to the blasts from the Atlantic are especially bare and miserable. There is Ben More, for example, in Mull, with Loch-na-Keal at its feet, and the great expanse of the Atlantic spread out to the horizon, with Ulva just across the entrance to the loch and Staffa and Iona in the distance; well, Ben More is a mountain of majestic aspect and strikingly advantageous situation, commanding a varied prospect of land and sea, inlet and island (a region that I have seen under effects of magical beauty when the distant isles floated like pale clouds on a waveless summer sea, and Ulva darkened in the twilight under the crescent moon), and yet all this fair scene is ever saddened by its stony sterility. Surely, when Scott wrote of that 'group of islets gay,' it was an epithet chosen only for rhyme. There is no gaiety of aspect in our British western isles, and the want of it is attributable almost entirely to the absence of sylvan vegetation. In Tennyson's little poem of *The Islet*, where the object is to produce the impression of a perfectly beautiful mountainous island, see how careful he is to adorn it with foliage :—

> 'Fairily delicate palaces shine
> Mixt with myrtle and clad with vine,
> And overstreamed and silvery-streaked
> With many a rivulet high against the Sun,
> The facets of the glorious mountain flash
> Above the valleys of palm and pine.'

So in *Enoch Arden*, when the poet wishes us to feel the perfect beauty of nature as a contrast to the wretchedness of the solitude that is possible amongst it, he takes good care that his mountain shall be well wooded :—

> 'The mountain wooded to the peak, the lawns
> And winding glades high up like ways to Heaven.'

There is but one advantage in the grim sterility of the Hebrides, it accords better than rich foliage with effects of gloom when the sternness of nature predominates over beauty; and since in all things the perfection of one quality is attainable only by the sacrifice of others, the sterility that may be regretted when nature tries occasionally to be gracious becomes an increase of her power when she is terrible. A waste of desolate coast with craggy heights unadorned by a single tree is the grandest of all theatres for a tempest. The advantage of sterility as an element of savage grandeur was well understood by Landseer. Many of

THE EAGLE'S NEST

Painted by SIR E. LANDSEER, R.A.

Etched by *C. O. MURRAY*

This is a good example of Landseer's slight but broadly truthful landscape-painting. The picture reaches perfection in one respect, its absolute unity of subject and impression; a unity that would have been impossible if gamekeepers and gentlemen had been introduced, even in the distance. Men may visit a desolate scene of this kind, but the eagle belongs to it. Something is said in the text about the impressiveness of sterility.

the backgrounds to his Highland subjects are purposely as sterile as possible. One of the best examples is 'The Eagle's Nest.' In this picture the landscape is of especially great importance, as the birds occupy very little space, and there is not a tree, not a twig, except the few twigs that are enough to make a nest according to an eagle's notions of comfort. Precipitous rocks descend to a gloomy tarn fed by a white rivulet, shreds of mist drive across the hills and before the face of the cliff, the male bird flies over the dark waters to his mate. This is the bleak home of the eagle, how different from the snug little nest of the nightingale, warmly sheltered by leafy curtains in southern summer woods!

The sterile and dreary appearance of our northern mountains is wonderfully enhanced by the first snows of winter, and this led Mr. Alfred Newton to paint from nature in Glen Coe at that time of the year, the result being his water-colour picture, 'Mountain Gloom, Glen Coe,'—the most strikingly truthful representation of northern melancholy landscape which up to that time had been exhibited in London. It has sometimes been suggested that a winter tour in North Britain would in some sort compensate the home traveller for the absence of Switzerland, but this is beyond the exact truth, as the annual snows that lie softly on the hills of Scotland are very different in character from the eternal snow that produces glaciers and the other arctic phenomena of the Alps.

The higher mountain-ranges of central Europe offer this attraction that they do really present an arctic region complete in everything but those wonders that can only be produced upon the sea. The first walk upon a glacier produces the feeling that one has got somehow to the polar regions, and, indeed, the simple truth is that the glaciers of France and Switzerland are really remnants of the far greater glaciers that covered western Europe at a time when, from the position of the planet, Britain was just as decidedly in the arctic regions as Spitzbergen is now. There is such a fascination in the high Alps, where everything is so different from what we see in the lowlands and amongst the inferior mountains even in the depth of winter, that it is not surprising if some men can scarcely keep away from them for a year.* The change from a well-provided hotel in the bottom of a warm Swiss valley to the ice-fields a few thousand feet higher can be accomplished by an easy climb, and

* 'The guide Michel Croz had thus been engaged in both of these expeditions in Dauphiné, and I naturally looked to him for assistance. Mr. Mathews (to whom I applied for information) gave him a high character, and concluded his reply to me by saying, "*he was only happy when upwards of ten thousand feet high.*"'—WHYMPER'S *Ascent of the Matterhorn.*

once in the upper region we feel a thousand miles away from civilisation. There are, I believe, four new experiences for which no description ever adequately prepares us, the first sight of the sea, the first journey in the Desert, the sight of flowing molten lava, and a walk on a great glacier. We feel in each case that the strange thing is pure nature, as much nature as a familiar English moor, yet so extraordinary that we might be in another planet. The slowest rivers in the world are the rivers of ice and of fire, the one destroying every tree upon its banks, first setting it aflame with the hot breath that precedes contact, then removing it as with a razor, the other, the ice-river, flowing more slowly still, hurting nothing that it does not touch, but grinding its bed with irresistible, incalculable power, the power that has hollowed the rock-basins where the great lakes rest and carried 'erratics' all over the country as a flood carries leaves in autumn.

It is curious but certain that the slowest and the swiftest motions are the most sublime, whilst the moderately quick motions scarcely affect us in any way. A very rapid river, such as the Rhone in the steepest parts of its course, is so fascinating that one is never tired of looking at the blue-green waters as they go rushing and swirling along, and it may be noticed that the poets (who never miss what is likely to impress their reader) are sure to mention the speed of any river that is at all remarkable for swiftness. Yet it may be doubted whether the motion of the Rhone, even when most rapid in times of flood, is more sublime than the quiet crawl of the *Mer de Glace*, so slow that its motion is absolutely invisible and only ascertainable by setting up a pole in the middle of it and fixing a point of sight on the opposite rock, after which, by careful observation at intervals, you may satisfy yourself that the huge mass of solid substance, weighing in itself perhaps as much as a Welsh mountain, is really and indubitably doing its ten or fifteen inches every twenty-four hours. The invisibility of the motion is so perfect that (as De Saussure tells us) a German named Plouquet undertook a journey in Switzerland towards the close of last century, and afterwards wrote a book for the express purpose of proving that glaciers were motionless. This he demonstrated to his own satisfaction and to that of a Literary Gazette then published at Jena. De Saussure's refutation was of a very simple and intelligible nature. He showed that some glaciers ended abruptly at the top of a precipice, and that in all cases of this kind fragments of ice were constantly falling and heaping themselves up at the foot. To keep up the supply of these fragments, he argued that the ice itself must be pushing towards the brink of the precipice continually.

THE MER DE GLACE

Sketch in Water-colour by J. M. W. TURNER, R.A.

Reproduced in Photogravure by *A. DAWSON*

This is the best known of European glaciers, and one of the finest, being so grandly accompanied by those stupendous mountain forms which in Alpine scenery answer to the pinnacles on a cathedral. In mountain-scenery scale changes everything. In a Scottish mountain a hollow, answering in position to that which contains the Mer de Glace, would be merely a 'corrie' with a small young stream in it, and perhaps a tarn. On Mont Blanc it is a prodigious corridor between 'aiguilles,' which are mountains in themselves of fearful height and steepness, and the stream is a mighty river of ice flowing with power enough to hollow out a Scottish lake-basin.

I have had occasion elsewhere to note some of the points of inferiority in the graphic arts, and here I may observe that no picture could convey the idea of a glacier's motion, still less could a painter convey to us the most sublime of all the ideas connected with glaciers —the prodigious work they have done in the past, and appalling length of time that it must have taken them to do it. Suppose that the rock-basin for a future lake was twenty miles long, and that the ice was going at the rate of a foot a day or 365 feet in the year, it must have taken fourteen years to do a mile, or two hundred and eighty years to accomplish the whole length of twenty miles. This would give *one scrape* along the future lake bottom in something short of three centuries; but not to exaggerate let us say that it would be scraped from end to end once in two hundred years. Now suppose that a model of a lake basin is to be made in Nature's own leisurely way, that a block of granite is taken as the material, and that a mason scrapes along it once with a stone and sand, this operation being repeated five times in a thousand years, how long will it take to hollow out a trough representing in miniature the depth of Loch Lomond or Loch Ness? Ideas and questions of this kind add immensely, in our conception, to the grandeur of the invisibly moving glacier, but they cannot be expressed by drawing, and we should never have had access to them without the aid of those scientific teachers whom some artists foolishly dislike.

The visible characteristics of a glacier that strike us all most powerfully when we first behold one are its roughness and the rather dirty appearance of the moraines, which look as if ashes had been purposely cast upon it. The unprepared spectator (if there are really any such in these days of photography) thinks of ice as something smooth and glassy, which indeed he may occasionally find in the Alps as an 'ice-slope,' somewhat resembling that which Whymper had to descend when he crossed the Col Dolent. 'For the first time in my life,' he tells us, 'I looked down a slope more than a thousand feet long, set at an angle of about 50°, which was a sheet of ice from top to bottom. It was unbroken by rock or crag, and anything thrown down it sped away unarrested until the level of the Glacier d'Argentière was reached.' This is what Nature can do in the way of a 'montagne russe' when it pleases her; she can spread an ice-sheet smooth enough for sledging, but a little too steep. There is no chance of sledging on a glacier, with its chasms and pinnacles of ice, itself a strange mountainous land in miniature, with white fantastic crests divided by valleys of azure depth wherein plunge the purest little streams, and in the larger hollows rest

tiny lakes, surrounded, as De Saussure said, by transparent walls 'de couleur d'aigue-marine.' There are probably few better places (amongst those easily accessible in Europe) for seeing the true nature of a glacier than the end of the *Mer de Glace* at the source of the Arveiron. There you see the thickness of the ice with its perishing pinnacles above and the grotto of ice below, whence the hard 'sea,' transformed into flowing water, begins its quick journey to the Rhone. Nothing in nature, except a worm turned to a butterfly, gains so prodigiously in speed as an ice-stream that becomes a water-stream. If the water runs six kilomètres an hour and the ice creeps two centimètres the water will be exactly three hundred thousand times the swifter of the two.*

We who have only seen Alpine glaciers know just enough about the subject to be able to imagine the far grander glaciers of the arctic regions, so long that they flow from the interior highlands down to the sea itself, and so thick that they present lofty cliffs of ice with a far greater depth beneath the water, the tall cliffs being relatively only like the narrow freeboard of a heavily laden vessel. We are told, too, that great rivers sometimes plunge into deep gulfs in the ice and find their way to the sea through icy caverns which no human eye may ever behold, but which, with the turbulent water rushing through their resounding halls, must be amongst the most magnificent things in nature.

As I have never been to Jan Mayen, and cannot conveniently go there just at present in order to write a page of original description, perhaps the indulgent reader will permit me to quote one from Lord Dufferin which gives us a vivid idea of the great arctic glaciers. He begins by speaking of an impenetrable veil of haze that 'hung suspended from the zenith to the sea' and at first concealed the island of Jan Mayen :—

'A few minutes more, and slowly, silently, in a manner you could take no count of, its dusky hue first deepened to a violet tinge, then gradually lifting, displayed a long line of coast—in reality but the roots of Beerenberg—dyed of the darkest purple; while, obedient to a common impulse, the clouds that wrapt its summit gently disengaged themselves, and left the mountain standing in all the magnificence of his 6870 feet, girdled by a single zone of pearly vapour, from underneath whose floating folds seven enormous glaciers rolled down into the sea! Nature seemed to have turned scene-shifter, so artfully were the phases of this glorious spectacle successively developed.

'Although—by reason of our having hit upon its side instead of its narrow

* The allowance here is handsome for the ice. I shall prove, later, that the speed of swift rivers is usually exaggerated.

end—the outline of Mount Beerenberg appeared to us more like a sugar-loaf than a spire—broader at the base and rounder at the top than I had imagined, —in size, colour, and effect it far surpassed anything I had anticipated. The glaciers were quite an unexpected element of beauty. Imagine a mighty river of as great a volume as the Thames—started down the side of a mountain,—bursting over every impediment,—whirled into a thousand eddies,—tumbling and raging on from ledge to ledge in quivering cataracts of foam,—then suddenly struck rigid by a power so instantaneous in its action that even the froth and fleeting wreaths of spray have stiffened to the immutability of sculpture. Unless you had seen it, it would be almost impossible to conceive the strangeness of the contrast between the actual tranquillity of these silent crystal rivers and the violent descending energy impressed upon their exterior. You must remember, too, all this is upon a scale of such prodigious magnitude, that when we succeeded subsequently in approaching the spot—where with a leap like that of Niagara one of these glaciers plunges down into the sea,—the eye, no longer able to take in its fluvial character, was content to rest in simple astonishment at what then appeared a lucent precipice of grey-green ice, rising to the height of several hundred feet above the masts of the vessel.'

At Spitzbergen the glaciers appear to be on a still larger scale, some of them being forty or fifty miles long by nine or ten in breadth, whilst their edges at the sea rise four or five hundred feet above the water, and great masses frequently topple over. 'Scoresby himself,' says Lord Dufferin, 'actually witnessed a mass of ice the size of a cathedral thunder down into the sea from a height of four hundred feet; frequently during our stay in Spitzbergen we ourselves observed specimens of these ice avalanches; and scarcely an hour passes without the solemn silence of the bay being disturbed by the thunderous boom resulting from similar catastrophes in adjacent valleys.'

As the characteristic which most impresses us in all the glaciers is, when we know it, simply the fact that the prodigiously heavy mass is all in motion, so the most impressive truth concerning the rocky pinnacles of lofty mountains is that they are always diminishing and have been diminishing during unnumbered ages. The glacier compensates its waste by the addition of fresh snow, but nothing ever compensates a mountain for the stones that are carried away on the moraines or for the sand that is ground out of the glacier's bed and carried down to the valley in its stream. When we know this, every aiguille in the Alps, every rough crest of our British hills, gains, for us, the pathos of ruin and the dignity of long resistance to inevitable fate. For it is as certain as anything can be with regard to illimitable time, that the very largest mass of rock, whose financial affairs may be briefly stated as 'steady expenditure but no income,' must ultimately come to nothing. Other mountains may arise, but those we know are doomed. Yet the decay

is of such a slow nature that the day of their final disappearance seems almost infinitely remote. Amongst human institutions they remind me of nothing so much as the Papacy which has always been losing since the dawn of the Reformation, yet seems no more likely to vanish than the Aiguille Verte.

The beauty of the rock-pinnacles in the Alps is entirely the beauty of consumption. They are thinned and refined as they wear away, or as their own icicles melt and fall in an hour of sunshine in summer. We may look to them as examples of endurance,—for what, to them, are the tempests of a thousand years?—but we must look elsewhere for an example of the everlasting. Can anything in nature be everlasting, unless, like the ocean, it is ever-renewed? Animal life renovates itself by feeding, and when the power to do this fails, dissolution speedily follows. An Alpine aiguille is not only unable to replace what it loses by food, but everything in nature that touches it takes something from its substance. The very air consumes it, the frost loosens the stones of it, the hoof of the chamois sets them flying down to the distant moraine, and no builder ever replaces them. If the tip of an eagle's wing touches the front of a precipice as he sails past it the atoms of mica that it removes fall down through the thin air,* and the precipice is, to that extent, demolished. The only gain of substance that I know of is when some adventurous traveller brings his bones up from the valley and leaves them to bleach on the ledge of an inaccessible precipice.

The temptation to scale those heights is natural to youth and strength, at least it seems so in modern days, though the strongest and most active men of antiquity and the middle ages do not appear to have felt it. If ever there was 'one crowded hour of glorious life' led by a little group of human beings it must have been that memorable hour on the summit of the Matterhorn, then for the first time ascended, from twenty minutes to two in the afternoon of the fourteenth of July, 1865. For four of the party, Croz, Hadow, Hudson, and Lord Francis Douglas, it was the last hour of life upon this planet, and the scene which enchanted

* This idea was suggested to me by an Oriental illustration of eternity that I vaguely remember. 'If an angel,' said the Oriental writer, 'were to fly past a tremendous precipice once in a thousand years and brush it somewhere slightly with his wing, and never omit to do so after the same interval, the precipice would ultimately be destroyed, yet eternity would only be begun.' Geology really offers examples of slow yet now accomplished destruction in some sort comparable to this, and yet eternity is only begun. One cannot call the Oriental illustration hyperbole, unimaginable as it may be, since, however slight the cause of destruction and however great the mass to be destroyed, destruction will certainly be accomplished if the cause persists, and after its inconceivably distant consummation 'eternity will only be begun.'

keen eyes so soon to be darkened and made bold hearts beat faster, which an instant after were to be stilled for ever, is too impressive to be described in any words but those of the only English survivor:—

'The day was one of those superlatively calm and clear ones which usually precede bad weather. The atmosphere was perfectly still and free from all clouds or vapours. Mountains fifty—nay, a hundred—miles off looked sharp and near. All their details—ridge and crag, snow and glacier, stood out with faultless definition. Pleasant thoughts of happy days in bygone years came up unbidden as we recognised the old familiar forms. All were revealed—not one of the principal peaks of the Alps was hidden. I see them clearly now—the great inner circles of giants, backed by the ranges, chains, and *massifs*. . . . Ten thousand feet beneath us were the green fields of Zermatt, dotted with chalets, from which blue smoke rose lazily. Eight thousand feet below, on the other side, were the pastures of Breil. There were black and gloomy forests; bright and cheerful meadows; bounding waterfalls and tranquil lakes; fertile lands and savage wastes; sunny plains and frigid *plateaux*. There were the most rugged forms and the most graceful outlines—bold perpendicular cliffs and gentle undulating slopes; rocky mountains and snowy mountains, sombre and solemn, or glittering and white, with walls—turrets—pinnacles—pyramids—domes—cones—and spires! There was every combination that the world can give, and every contrast that the heart could desire.'

After this vivid description of a real and most wonderful experience which, if it has ever been equalled, has certainly never been surpassed, the best thing to do is to abstain from any account of inferior experiences and leave the reader, in imagination, still on that perilous peak. The next chapter will bring him to the level of an island in a lake, whence we may, at our leisure, observe some of the great changes that occur in the aspect of a mountain, and give it an apparent variety of existence having some analogy with the various moods of man.

CHAPTER XX.

Moods of a Mountain.

THERE is only one way to ascertain the true nature of the changes produced in the appearance of a mountain, and that is to live near to one for at least a year, and study it. In the present chapter I intend to convey, if possible, some of the results of such study, which in my case extended over several years. It may be worth while to explain the method of observation on which the chapter is founded.

Let me first be permitted to say something about topographic drawing, which is the necessary foundation of all *accurate* note-taking from Nature. It is not the outcome of the artistic spirit at all, but of the scientific. I never knew an artist who made topographic drawings, and I never heard of any being made by artists except in the cases of a few young Englishmen who were, at one time, working under the influence of Mr. Ruskin, which in this matter (though by no means in all other matters) was a strictly scientific influence.

Now it is a very strange and wonderful thing, which for a long time seemed to me utterly unaccountable, that artists should have such an antipathy to topography. I understand their antipathy now, and will give the reasons for it shortly in their full force, but just for the present wish to explain why it is apparently so unreasonable.

Artists are always insisting upon the value of accuracy in drawing, and yet if you draw landscape accurately they are sure to dislike your work. If, in making a study from a living, human model, or from a statue, you make the legs proportionately shorter or longer than they are in the original, the master will blame your inaccuracy. If, in making a study from landscape nature, you draw things faithfully, the master will blame your accuracy. He will call it 'mappy,' to use Turner's word, or he will say, in Harding's language, that it is 'unintelligent, identical imitation.' Whatever he says, his language will be that of disapproval, very likely of ridicule. And yet the pure topography that artists dislike and condemn is nothing else than the same quality of accurate drawing which they encourage in all students of the figure by giving them praise and prizes. Make an accurate study of a man, for which you will win approbation, then go and make a study of a mountain, with equal fidelity

to curves and angles, the certain result will be that despised thing, a piece of pure topography.

It would be interesting to make the converse experiment of drawing a figure on those principles that artists habitually apply to landscape. The artist would then express his interest in the natural swelling of a muscle by increasing it to the size of a wen, and his admiration of the forehead of Socrates by elevating it to the height of a helmet. If the legs of a Life-guardsman seemed rather too long, they might be reduced to the length of his femur, and it might be conventionally understood amongst connoisseurs that to represent the true proportions of the body was to give evidence of a matter-of-fact and inartistic intellect.

At this point the reader may perhaps feel uncertain whether truth can be ascertained at all. He may say, 'You make a drawing that you call topographic; you may say that it is faithful to the natural forms, but for anything I know to the contrary, Turner's drawing may be more faithful than yours, and is likely to be so, as he was an infinitely better artist.'

To doubts of this kind the answer is, that science affords us certain methods by which the really apparent size of objects, and also their shapes, so far as all apparent boundaries are concerned, can be accurately determined. But before we come to these it may be necessary to explain that there is a difference between the imaginary appearance of an object and its real appearance. An artist will generally draw the imaginary appearance, when he does not wilfully go far beyond even that, by wilful exaggerations of interesting features, but a scientific topographer ought to confine himself to the real appearance.

It is excessively difficult to make this distinction clear to any one who has not been prepared for questions of this kind, because he will at once object that if a thing appears to him in such or such a way, it is a real appearance, and yet the probability is that he is mistaken, and that it is only an imaginary appearance after all. However, the demonstration can be made perfectly clear to any one who understands what minutes and degrees are, and who knows how angles can be measured. The best elementary example to begin with is the apparent size of the moon,* In the year 1869 a foreign magazine contained an article by a man of science, who, from his scientific point of view, had been led to make experiments which I have often made from the artistic, and the results were curiously the same. He had acquired a habit of asking people

* The sentences which immediately follow are abridged from an article that I contributed to the *Portfolio* in 1875 on 'The Apparent Size of Objects.'

how big the moon looked to them. The answer was, in almost every case, 'As big as a plate.' I myself have heard an Englishman say, 'As big as a Cheshire cheese.' A lady answered, 'As big as a Dutch cheese;' another said, 'Bigger than that; I should say the moon appears like one of those globe-mirrors that one puts in gardens.' Here occurs a little difficulty. All these objects — plates, Cheshire cheeses, Dutch cheeses, and globe-mirrors — appear larger or smaller in proportion to their distance from the eye, a fact of which nobody who has not studied drawing seems to have any distinct idea. People think that a plate two yards from them and a plate of the same size at three yards have the same apparent dimensions. The distance, therefore, must be fixed. When you try to fix it, a general audience will agree very readily that the plate shall be a person's own plate at a dinner-table. For a very tall man, sitting very straight, this distance is twenty-two inches; but it is much less for little men and ladies. However, you will find numbers of people who will readily assent to the proposition that the apparent size of the moon is that of a plate at less than twenty-two inches. This is the imaginary apparent diameter. The real apparent diameter of the moon is thirty-one minutes, which in a circle with a radius of twenty-two inches, gives a diameter of one-fifth of an inch; so that a circle with a diameter of one-fifth of an inch, seen at a distance of twenty-two inches, represents the real appearance of the moon as seen from the earth; but the diameter of an ordinary dinner-plate is over nine inches. A comparison of areas demonstrates that the imaginary appearance is an exaggeration of the real appearance by more than two thousand times.* Stated in another way, the innocent eye of a spectator who has never studied the subject imagines that the apparent disc of the moon occupies two thousand times more space in the dome of heaven than that which it really occupies. The truth is, that the real appearance of the moon is so small that a pea held on a needle's point will eclipse it.

It follows naturally from this habitual exaggeration of the innocent eye that all artists who draw emotionally make the moon prodigious. In one of Samuel Palmer's Moonrises there is an overturned bucket quite close to the foreground; it is the object nearest to the spectator, yet the diameter of the bottom of it does not much exceed half the diameter of the moon's disc. In the moonlight scene illustrating Bamfylde's *Christmas* there is a cottage in the foreground, and we see the interior with plates on the shelf. Here the moon is smaller, because higher in

* The account stands thus in superficial tenths of an inch: apparent area of the moon, 3·14; area of the plate, 6361·74.

the sky, yet its diameter is twice that of a plate.* In Turner's 'Chateau Gaillard' the moon's disc is three times as broad as the casks in the boat, and twice as broad as the body of a man in the immediate foreground. But the best example I remember in Turner is the moon in his drawing of St. Denis, where her disc is made broader than the hind wheel of a carriage in the foreground. To prevent misunderstanding, or misrepresentation, I repeat that in these exaggerations the artists are perfectly justified, because the imaginary, and not the real, appearance is the proper object of art. At the same time the fact may be noted as remarkable that there are no corresponding exaggerations in the artistic drawing of the figure. The moon is the eye of the landscape, and exaggerated because it attracts attention; but what figure-painter would make the eye of a pretty girl as big as a tea-cup? Neither do artists commit the same exaggerations when they draw things that we are accustomed to handle; for example, however inaccurate a draughtsman might be, he would never make the wheel of a wheelbarrow six feet high, and yet that exaggeration, prodigious and impossible as it seems, would be moderate in comparison with the common exaggerations of the moon.

And now we come to another most strange and inexplicable fact about imaginary appearances, as contrasted with real appearances, and that is the wonderful tendency to exaggerate the height of high objects. It is the more wonderful, when we reflect upon it, that although the moon is certainly of all created objects the one whose apparent dimensions are most exaggerated, the popular imagination does not alter the proportions of her height and width. If people saw the moon as they see mountains she would present the appearance of a rather narrow oval, the shorter diameter always parallel with the horizon.

The exaggeration of height in popular mountain-drawing is easily demonstrated by a measurement of angles. If the slope of a mountain is ascertained to be forty degrees in nature, and an artist makes it sixty, and if the public believes the artist's drawing to be a faithful representation, then artist and public together have been deceived by the imaginary appearance. If a mountain-crest rises ten degrees above the horizon, and an artist (as he is sure to do) makes it twenty, then his drawing is unfaithful to the real appearance, and its unfaithfulness can be demonstrated by taking an angle with a sextant; but, at the same time, he

* In making the moon's disc narrower when high in the sky than at moonrise the artist has rendered the imaginary appearance accurately, but the real appearance does not show any diminution as she ascends the sky.

might prove its fidelity to the imaginary appearance by getting popular suffrages in his favour.

Topographic drawing, then, is not an artistic but a scientific kind of work, and the better it is done the more it disobeys the one rule of the artist, to render the imaginary appearance only. Yet there are certain circumstances in which a little topographic drawing, or in other words a little really accurate drawing, may be necessary to the student of nature, that his memoranda may have some positive value for reference. The present instance is a case in point. Memoranda of changes of effect on a mountain ought to be made either upon a careful topographic drawing, or else with the help of one for reference.

It may perhaps be a convenience to some students if I explain in this place the system adopted by myself long ago in the Highlands. It was not quite a perfect system, but it served me well for the unpretending usefulness of private study. I will first describe it briefly, and then show how it might be brought to greater perfection.

I began by making, with the utmost care, a topographic drawing of Ben Cruachan as seen from a place easily accessible to me. This was done on clear days, and without anything that could be called an effect. The drawing measured eighteen inches by nine, a larger size than was necessary, and had no other object than simple accuracy of form, without any suggestion of effect. I had already made many very careful pen studies of mountain lines on a much larger scale, some of them between three and four feet long, and had acquired a strong liking, almost amounting to a passion, for the laborious task of following out mountain lines in their finer modulations. Popular mountain-drawing, especially in water-colour pictures, appeared to me in those days coarse, careless, and unobservant to an inexpressible degree, though I have since found out that if artists drew mountains accurately they would be very likely to miss those charms of colour and effect (not to mention composition that distorts every line in a landscape) on which their popularity depends.

Well, the drawing being done, I made an etching from it, of its own size, also without effect, and had the etching printed, always keeping copies of it by me, and when a notable effect occurred I noted the changes produced by it with a pencil upon the etching by drawing and written words. I did this not only for Ben Cruachan, but for several other views on the lake shores round about my dwelling. This practice taught me a great deal, but I will now show how it might be improved upon.

The etching (or any other kind of reproduction) might with advan-

Distant view of Ben Loy, from a Cottage near Kilchurn. *The black lines are true, or nearly so, the dotted lines exhibit the common artistic exaggeration of the same subject in a drawing by T. Allom. It is worth while to compare the protuberances in detail.*

Here the firm black lines are a topographic drawing of Ben Cruachan, *and a bit of* Craiganunie *to the left. The dotted lines give the exaggerations in Turner's* Ben Cruachan (*the same view*). *The reader will observe how carefully Turner avoided the monotony of the slope by inventing variations. To escape the same monotony in the foreground he inserted an imaginary castle. Observe the bold bit of invention over* Craiganunie.

tage be in dotted lines, and printed in pale red or brown ink. These would then be understood to be the lines of substance in any case, and those of effect might be added with pencil, pen, or brush, as each effect occurred. Again, it is not desirable that the drawing should be very large, as a small one would sufficiently answer the purpose and be more rapidly filled. Lastly, I should say that if the effect were roughly sketched in oil colour on another copy of the etching, whilst it was still vividly fresh in the memory, that would be better than to depend on notes in pencil only, notes of which the full significance may be lost, even to their author, in course of time.

Besides taking notes from one place, the student who desires to ascertain the true conformation of a mountain ought to observe it from many places, like the honest Japanese artist who drew Fusi Yama from a hundred points. By this method he will gradually ascertain which are really the highest points of the mountain, thereby delivering himself from the illusion produced by perspective, and he will know the real position and protuberance of its bosses. But to complete his knowledge he must walk all over it, in different directions, and after having gained a complete familiarity with the mountain as a real thing, and not as a mere *εἴδωλον*, or phantom of the mind, it might perhaps be well if he made a model of it in wax or clay.*

All this, I repeat, is desirable only when we want to know the truth, to gratify scientific curiosity. An artist knows enough for his purposes when he has seen a mountain under a single striking effect, and there are even reasons for believing that it is better for him not to confuse and obliterate the first clear image by observing any subsequent effects, at least with any strain of attention. It is well for him to unite one mountain and one effect together, and not to have any more knowledge about the mountain than his recollection of what was visible at the time when the effect took place. Most of us who have any memory for mountains recall easily with some degree of distinctness those that we have seen on a single occasion during our travels, and in every instance of this kind (at least it is so in my own experience) the mountain is remembered with the effect that clothed or disguised it *then*. Since writing the preceding sentence I have recalled two mountains that I saw more

* Even when a model is not by any means accurate in matter of detail it is still very useful for experiments in lighting. A lamp may be placed in any position relatively to it, and will cast shadows that have the advantage of remaining in their places. Even a very rough model of moderate dimensions will, in this way, give interesting and very suggestive results. The great defect of models is the want of a misty atmosphere, the air being always clear for any object that can be contained in a room.

than thirty years ago, and have never visited since. They are indelibly associated with evening effects because I saw them in the evening, and I have no doubt that if I had revisited those mountains at other times of the day those evening effects would have been completely obliterated, and by the confusion of other effects seen since, there would probably have remained no distinct recollection of any effect at all.

The most effectless condition of a mountain is in broad but dull daylight, when there is diffused light everywhere under a monotonous canopy of cloud. This condition of things is often associated with great clearness, but as there is no brilliance the clearness is not of a striking or obtrusive kind, and is not likely to be noticed by any but the most observant. Forms are not brought out well, except in outlines, as there is a certain flatness everywhere, neither are there any of those brilliant contrasts of massed colour which are due exclusively to effect. Yet there is one advantage in this kind of lighting which is quite unrivalled in every other; it presents such an opportunity for the observation of local colour. The most faithful studies of local colour may be obtained at such times, but as there is no effect they have a map-like appearance which makes them unpleasing and unpopular. The only value of them is a purely scientific value, comparable to that of topographic lines. They show the colour of rocks, even at a distance, which is interesting to the geologist, and they show the colours given by vegetation, as for example, the growth of flowers, the running to seed of plants over a considerable area of land, the reddening of ferns in their decay, not to speak of the immense variety of greens in summer foliage, or of gold and russet in autumn. I remember believing that it would be wise for an artist to seize upon these good opportunities for the study of local colour on mountains, and have myself spent some thankless labour in that way; but powerful artists are too synthetic in their methods to care much for an analysis of this kind, and the result of such study looks so dull, even when most truthful, that there is little encouragement to go on with it.

An effect of simple diffused daylight under a cloudy sky, like that we have just been considering, is dull in landscape-painting, and yet it is very frequently adopted by figure-painters, especially for works of a serious character. They neither want sunshine nor shadows, as they can always make their pictures interesting by appealing to the ever-ready human sympathy for humanity. The painters of the figure are much to be envied for their advantages, and amongst the rest for these two: that if they have a tendency to draw correctly it is not counted against

them as being topographic and inartistic, whilst if they are content to study quietly and deliberately in diffused daylight (which, on the whole, shows objects better than any other illumination) their works are not condemned for the absence of 'vigorous' effect.

We will now proceed to consider in what way full sunshine operates in revealing or dissimulating the forms of a mountain.

Our first natural idea is, of course, that sunshine can do nothing but exhibit form, and that the brighter the light is the more clearly will forms be exhibited; but if we analyse the visible shape of a mountain we shall always find that it consists, primarily, of a few very large masses, and that upon these large masses a multitude of smaller masses are fixed in their places as the mountains themselves are fixed upon the globe of the earth. Hence it follows that if the nature of the illumination is such as to bring some masses, large or small, into striking prominence, whilst others are left in shade and in apparent or comparative flatness, that illumination will be by no means a just, fair, or impartial exposition of the subject, however brilliant and frank it may appear. Sunshine seems to conceal nothing, it appears to be frankness itself, to send the rays of its glorious revelation into every nook and cranny; but the truth is that it resembles the argument of an advocate rather than a scientific statement, it exhibits some facts very prominently, and tacitly denies the existence of others at least equally important by the simple process of passing them over. To know how mendacious is this seemingly truthful splendour we have only to watch a mountain on a very bright day from early morning till sunset, at least from hour to hour. A painter who is making studies can watch almost continuously and feel interested all the time; a simple observer could hardly do that, but he might have constancy enough, during one long summer's day, to revisit the same scene every hour and examine it carefully for a few minutes. If he did so he would first see, in the slanting light of the low early sun, very broad lights and shadows in great masses, and in all those parts of the mountain where a transverse light caught the minor masses, the bosses and crags and eminences which are on the slope of a mountain what ripples are on the side of a great wave, he would see a multitude of minor lights and shadows conveying the idea that the mountain was exceptionally rugged in those parts. As the day advanced and the light struck those rough and rugged parts less obliquely, the observer would be inclined to think that he had been rather mistaken in his estimate of their nature, that they were not so rugged as he thought, and at the same time some of the larger

masses, which up to that time had remained quiet in the repose of direct light or unbroken shadow, would exhibit varieties of form previously unsuspected. I have elsewhere compared the minor masses on a mountain to the position of the mountains themselves upon the globe of the earth. If the reader will transfer this comparison from the earth to the moon it will be a slight improvement for two reasons: first, because the moon is a much smaller planet with much loftier mountains; and, secondly, because we can see it through a telescope. It naturally happens that the surface appears roughest towards the edge of the space illuminated by the sun, the part that is fully lighted appearing less mountainous, whilst of the dark portion we do not see, by the dim earth-light, whether it is mountainous or not.

About noon, on a bright day, the appearance of a mountain is generally at its dullest, but as the sun declines all the preceding phenomena of lights and shadows are repeated inversely,* till at sunset the shadows are what they were at sunrise, but in an opposite direction. Hence it follows that although the sun never at any one time reveals the truth about mountain form, he reveals it ultimately in a certain way by contradictory statements, as a brilliant writer fails to tell the truth at once, because he wants to be brilliant; and yet if you read him long enough, you may gather a general notion of the truth from him, because he will say one thing at one time, and its opposite, just as brilliantly, at another time.

The differences of colour between the lighted sides of mountainous masses and their shaded sides open one of the most difficult questions in the study of landscape. Nobody really understands them, though it often happens that an observant landscape-painter will hit the mark very accurately with regard to a particular well-remembered effect. I am unable to state any definite laws about the matter, but I may perhaps be able to point to a few truths ascertained, in a painter's way, by observing the relation between the lights and shadows of a mountain in nature, and by trying to get something like the same relation in experimental studies or sketches in oil colour.

The best entrance into the subject is in observing the treatment of drapery by figure-painters. The folds of drapery bear some slight resemblance to the ravines and projections of a mountain-side and to some of its steeper slopes. Lights catch its projections, shade lies in its hollows, cast shadows are thrown from a prominent mass across minor

* All this description is founded on the supposition that the aspect of the mountain is favourable to observations of this kind. Ben Cruachan, as seen from Loch Awe, is so in the highest degree.

masses that are insignificant for the time being. The local colour of the mountain is more varied, but the very uniformity of drapery in this respect makes it a better subject for elementary consideration. The reader is, no doubt, aware already that some of the most famous painters (Raphael is of the number) have not hesitated to make their draperies chromatically weaker in the lights, by the admixture of white in sufficient quantity to chill the tint, whilst they coloured them powerfully in the shadows. This was done because draughtsmen in black and white had accustomed themselves to the liberty of neglecting local colour altogether (the classical school of Italian engraving is founded upon that neglect, and owes much of its brilliancy to it), and it is very difficult for a painter to deny himself the resource of the large scale of tonic values between white and black, and accept, instead, the limited scale between red and a darker red. Now, if we compare this system with that of Nature in the illumination of a mountain we shall find it curiously the reverse of what Nature usually does. Her colour is not destroyed in light, it is scarcely enfeebled, except when there is great distance or a misty atmosphere, but in the shaded parts of the mountain it is wonderfully modified. It seems as if the illuminated parts had power to pierce the intervening atmosphere, and, if I may so express it, carry their colour along with them, whilst the darker portions were somehow impeded and were unable to carry their own local colour to the eye of the distant spectator. This is a very unscientific way of stating the matter, but it may be intelligible. Even the most vulgar painters of mountainous scenery have learned the common trick of cooling their shadows with blue or bluish grey. Nature does this in some effects, to a wonderful degree, but what is still more remarkable is her easy obliteration of detail in the shadows, so that it seems as if the shadows receded and the lights advanced. As an illustration of this I may again have recourse to the moon. Some critic may say that I am very fond of the moon in this chapter, but she is a convenience because many people have seen her.* Well, one of the most curious facts about the appearance of the moon is that the lighted portion and the shaded side immediately contiguous to it do not appear to be on the same plane. The lighted side advances, and when seen through a telescope has a form perceptibly globular, the shaded side looks like a

* An authentic anecdote may perhaps be tolerated in a footnote. A French examiner had been brow-beating a clever youth who was rather irritated by the treatment he had received. At last the examiner said, 'You have seen the moon, have you not?' and the youth replied, with perfect mock gravity, that he had not. 'Do you mean to tell me that you have never seen the moon?' 'I have certainly heard of her, sir, but it would be affirming too much to say that I had seen her with my own eyes.'

flat disc set behind it. Something of the same effect is to be observed in the illumination of our terrestrial mountains, and it is not at all surprising that skilful painters should look upon the 'lights' as one thing, or class of things, and the shaded portion as a sort of flat ground on which the lights are to be boldly and massively painted. I need not add that the shadows require subsequent labour also, but of a much less obtrusive kind.

The colour of mountain shadows is, no doubt, in some degree due to the mere effect of contrast with the lights. If the lights are warm in tone their very warmth will produce a coolness in the shadows as in the common opposition of yellow and pearly grey. Perhaps the nearest approach to a general law on the subject attainable by us at present may be stated in the following terms: It may be said that the shadows on a mountain are of the same colour that the whole mountain would have worn at that hour if no portion of it had been struck by direct sunshine, except that they are modified by contrast in the direction of a hue complementary to that of the lights, and also modified by reflection from the illuminated portions in places that can receive such reflections. I need hardly add that a theory might be more complete than this without being of any great practical use to artists. Their work is considered to be successful when the relation between the lighted side of a mountain (or anything else) and its shaded side is agreeable to the eye, and does not, to the seeker of aesthetic pleasure, seem absolutely impossible. Now, to seek for two tints, a light one and a darker one, that harmonise pleasantly when laid side by side is, no doubt, a very interesting amusement, and to a clever artist it is a lucrative amusement also, but it may be entirely independent of the relation that exists in nature between the lights and shadows on a mountain.

The colour of the lights, in nature, is due to a combination of causes, the most important of which are the local colour of the rocks and vegetation, and the tint of the light itself. It is scarcely necessary to say anything, in this place, about the changes of vegetation; the subject is extensive, and would rapidly develope our chapter into a volume like *The Sylvan Year;* but I have never yet dealt with the variety of tint in sunshine.

There appears to be a difference of opinion amongst artists on this subject, which may be due to differences of idiosyncrasy. Leslie was opposed to the idea that sunshine was yellow, and gave as a proof the practice of Constable, who 'fearlessly painted midsummer noon-day heat with blues, greens, and greys forming the predominant masses.' He also held that the practice of certain artists was mistaken when they gave a

yellow tinge to all objects in noon-day sunshine, inferring that 'so it must be because the local colour of the sun is yellow. But in fact,' he continued, 'excepting in the morning and evening, white, in sunshine, is only a purer white, and blue receives not the least tint of green; indeed, in blue, even when lighted by the warmest setting sun, it is not easy to detect any change.' Samuel Palmer, on the other hand, who was a much more experienced student of landscape than Leslie, held that sunshine was distinctly golden, and believed that a little cadmium yellow was necessary to bring white to something like its quality. Turner was distinctly on the same side.

It is not possible to propose any question less capable of positive and absolute solution, because colour is a mere personal sensation that differs with different individuals quite as much as taste. All that can be done is to record one's own experience without insisting upon it as more authoritative than that of others. I should say, then, that the colour of sunshine appears to be very different at different times, that there are times when it seems to be almost a perfectly neutral white light leaving greens and blues very cool, and other times when it certainly tinges everything with gold even in the middle of the day. In saying this I do not feel positively certain that when the light of direct sunshine seems to me perfectly neutral and white it ever is so really. I am inclined, rather, to suspect that if at such times we could compare it with absolutely colourless light we should still find it to be a little golden. As an illustration of the ease with which the eye adapts itself to tinted light, and of the readiness of the mind to forget that it is tinted, may be mentioned our sudden perception of the *extreme* yellowness of gaslight when a cold electric flare is set up suddenly in its neighbourhood. Another example is in the use of papers which have a very slight tint of cream-colour. We write upon them without thinking of the tint, but if a perfectly cold white paper is set beside them, then we perceive it.

The proof of the rarity of crude blues and greens in natural sunshine is that the painted imitation of those colours in sky and foliage is never really satisfactory unless it is modified by complementary tints. Even those painted skies which are condemned by the public for the too great crudity of their blue have often been carefully, though perhaps not sufficiently, tempered by the mixture of red and yellow.

Before leaving the subject of mountain scenery in full sunshine, I may indicate a few conditions of its colouring amongst the many that we find in nature.

In *very* near hill scenery on a small scale (a large mountain can only

be seen at some distance) the relation of shade to light is not very different from that on ordinary objects, as there is little intervention of atmosphere. A green hill is yellowish green in sunshine, and a darker and colder green in shadow. A field of ripe wheat on the hill-side is pale gold in the light, darker gold in the shadow. Buckwheat is a golden brown in the light, a duller brown with a little grey in the shadow. Heather in flower is purple in the light, and a colder, darker purple in the shadow. These relations of tint are easily noted, and not much more difficult to render in painting than the tints of a piece of drapery, besides which they are plausible and intelligible; they give rise to no doubt or controversy, they explain themselves. It is when you have great intervening spaces of atmosphere that the real difficulty begins. Then the shade takes a new relation to the light, a relation which is natural, since it exists in nature, but which if truly copied in art is not likely to *appear* natural. If the lights on the mountain are yellowish the shadows may be a warm grey, if the lights incline more to orange the shadows may be bluer, they will not be a deeper orange. The light of the setting sun, striking across a rugged mountain-side in late autumn, when the decaying vegetation has reddened the local colour, may, if the light itself is also red, turn everything it catches into the richest and most incredible crimson, and in that case all the shadows will be dyed with a magnificent purple. Suppose that it is winter, and that your mountain is covered with snow from crest to base, and all its swelling forms are as clearly and cleanly modelled as those of a marble statue, then the tints of the snow in light may pass from a creamy white to the purest and most delicate rose-colour, and the shadows will be more like the pale, pure sky than anything on which human feet may tread. I know nothing in the visible world that combines splendour and purity so perfectly as a great mountain entirely covered with frozen snow and reflected in the vast mirror of a lake. As the sun declines its thousand shadows lengthen, pure as the cold green-azure in the depth of a glacier's crevasse, and the illuminated snow takes first the tender colour of a white rose, and then the flush of a red one, and the sky turns to a pale malachite green till the rare strange vision fades into ghastly grey, but leaves with you a permanent recollection of its too transient beauty.

This is the wintry condition of complete snow as I have seen it in the utmost perfection at Loch Awe, when the whiteness of the mountain was interfered with only by the emergence of the trees in its belt of forest and the dark rocks that the snow could not entirely conceal. Artists naturally prefer the intermediate condition when a mountain of 3600 feet is clear of snow up to two-thirds of its height, whilst the

remaining third is covered. The colour of the lower portion will then be rich in warm yellows, browns, and russets, owing to the decayed vegetation, and there will be a pretty gradation from no snow to deep snow, through a debateable land where a sprinkled powder of snow becomes denser as the eye ascends. This is the condition of the Highland mountains in late autumn and early spring. As summer approaches the snow is left only in the upper hollows, and in the hottest days of the year there will be a small patch or two in some recess that looks to the north.

I have spoken hitherto only of effects produced either in clear weather or in diffused light, when the sky is uniformly covered with a canopy of cloud. It is time now to consider some of the principal results of cloudy weather so far as the appearance of the mountain itself is concerned.

The first notable consequence is the accidental shadows that are cast by clouds upon the steep sides of the mountain. They eclipse the mountain partially, but with such rapidity that the passing of the shadows is felt to be rather an addition to than a detraction from the liveliness of the landscape. A shadow will run up the steepest mountain at the rate of two or three miles a minute without being arrested by any obstacle whatever. During its rapid passage it will reveal much about structure by detaching first one mass and then another, when without its aid we should never have suspected the chasm. Those broader chasms whose existence is already known to us are often rendered far more imposing by the presence of a cloud-shadow that gives a striking prominence and distinctness to an important mass. You may see, for example, the shoulder of a near mountain splendid in full and glorious sunshine when the gulf of a great corrie beyond it is filled with an indigo gloom, and a minute or two later the shoulder may be dark against a resplendent background. These sudden oppositions are of very frequent occurrence in the Highlands of Scotland, and are one of the reasons why the landscapes there are so much more lively and interesting than they can be in 'cloudless climes.'

Another form of cloud-shadow is produced when the cloud is itself in actual contact with the mountain. It may touch the mountain-side and yet project from it considerably, so as to cast an extensive shadow when the hill is steep and the sun high. Sometimes the cloud covers the crest entirely, and spreads out from it widely; and as a man with a broad-brimmed hat has his face in shadow but light on his breast, so the upper part of the hill may be shaded and its lower slopes in sunshine.

There are certain effects in nature that seem contradictory, and would, of course, be censured as false or unintelligible in painting, but the delightfulness of Nature is that she does exactly as she likes. One of the effects (I have mentioned it elsewhere, but this chapter would be incomplete without it) is produced when the lower strata of the atmosphere are misty and the upper ones perfectly clear. Then you may see trees and other objects receding from you to the foot of the mountain, which seems a long way off, whereas if you look up you see the summit sharply defined with clear detail and apparently much nearer than the base. The explanation is, that you look through a greater thickness of mist straight before you than when you are looking up. Sometimes in northern climates the entire base of a mountain is hidden in thick, dark cloud, but the summit becomes suddenly and clearly visible, for a moment, through an opening of the cloud. When this happens the crest is like a rock suspended in the sky, and wonderfully, perilously near.

An effect that is less astonishing, but of the same class, is produced when the whole of a mountain on the other side of a lake is concealed by mist with the exception of its summit that rises clear above the mist. The juncture of land and water is entirely invisible, and there seems no reason to believe that you are not looking upon a misty ocean, except that, high in air, the solid mountain crest is to be seen, pale perhaps, and not very substantial in its aspect, but you know that it is a mass of granite. We may not be much disposed to hunt after analogies, yet there is one analogy connected with this effect that I may pause to mention. The mountain-crest *appears* to be erected upon nothing, but in reality its foundations are the strongest and deepest that we know upon the earth, or can imagine. It is a tower of igneous rock, or rather an enormous monolith, never weakened by being hollowed into chambers, and it is not simply erected in a shallow hole for a foundation, as a post may be set up in a field, but the roots of it are the hardest portion of the earth's crust. Even so, when the ignorant see the crown and summit of the strongest thought and deepest knowledge, but cannot see the mighty foundation by reason of the mists of their own ignorance, they think there is no basis, and yet the basis lies firm and deep in the everlasting nature of things.

The lowest of all well-defined clouds, as distinguished from mists, is the low lake rain-cloud that may sometimes be seen at a little distance above the water, and the finest example of this that I ever witnessed occurred on the first of June, 1861, at half-past nine in the evening. I had time to take a sufficiently careful memorandum, which is lying before

me. The summit of Ben Cruachan was entirely hidden in cloud, that descended also into the corrie; after that the hill-side lay gloomily clear, except for the cloud that I have now to describe. It extended all along the visible base of Ben Cruachan and Ben Vorich, and the bottom fringe of it was from one hundred to three hundred feet above the level of the lake. It had three or four summits, varying in height, from its own base, between three hundred and fifteen hundred feet. The outline of these great billows was as perfectly defined against the dark mountain as any cloud ever could be against the sky. It was really what we call a cloud, and not an indefinite mist. I have often seen this on other occasions, but never quite with the same clearness of definition.

The belt rain-cloud that girdles highland mountains at the height of from one to two thousand feet is one of the commonest phenomena of northern lake districts. It may occur at any time of the day, but I have seen it most commonly in the evening when the air is still and the rain has ceased. Sometimes it will divide the whole mountain quite clearly into two portions. It is perfectly opaque, and often very sharply defined —two great difficulties for painters, as opacity and clearness of definition are held to be faults in painted clouds.* Besides these objections, there is the further one that these belt-clouds are often very fantastic in their forms, having sometimes backs curved like those of fishes, whilst at others they are like festoons ending with a sort of flourish in the air. The appearance of opacity and definition seems to be due to quantity of cloud-stuff in the cloud itself and to its distance from the spectator. I find in a valuable memorandum that the belt-cloud on the nearest mountain is described as thin mist, that on a further one as thicker white mist, and that most remote from the spectator as a thick grey cloud with a very definite outline. Even the near cloud is quite opaque, as you can see nothing through it, but it looks soft about the edges. On a still nearer view the skirt of cloud is seen to trail and drag amongst the rocks and trees which are partially seen through it, and then, in popular language, it is called 'mist.'

The grey belt-clouds are often associated in Highland scenery with the most magnificent deep colouring of the mountain-sides in the increasing gloom of twilight. In the way of solemn grandeur I know

* Here is a good example of what has been already said about the superior convenience of literature for the plain statement of a truth. Nobody will accuse me of being a bad writer for having uttered a plain truth in this plain sentence, but if a painter were to put the same truth into a picture, he would certainly incur blame for the hardness and opacity of his clouds.

nothing to excel a Highland mountain on the evening of a rainy day when the rain is over and the sky is all gloomy still, except perhaps a streak of pale yellow light in the west. In the increasing darkness the blues, and purples, and dim greens of the mountain deepen, deepen, deepen, till the wonder is that any colour can be visible at all, but there it is still, in sombre magnificence, mysterious, indescribable, darker far than black itself ever is in daylight. Scenes of that kind affect some natures to melancholy. Each of us can but describe his own impression. On me they produce the effect of solemn and mournful music, like the funeral marches of Beethoven and Chopin. Nay, it even seems as if the obsequies of any one mortal were too small a matter to be associated with the hours of the great sadness of the natural world, and Imagination connects them rather with the extinction of noble races of mankind, the death of ancient civilisations, the irrevocable passing away of everything that seems to us so very well worth preserving, and yet so impossible to preserve.

The crest-cloud, or 'night-cap,' as it is familiarly called with reference to our British hills, is so well known that it hardly needs description, at least in its commoner forms, but it sometimes displays some novelty and originality. When the crest of the mountain is rounded the cloud sometimes covers it very exactly, and ripples down like a periwig, or it may fit like the hair of a tonsured priest, the pate of the mountain just protruding so that if you stood upon the summit you would be able to see in every direction. Sometimes the crest-cloud sits on the summit and has all the appearance of clinging to it desperately as if it feared to be blown away, at other times it leaves the summit bare and poises itself in empty space on one side of the peak, a situation in which, as Mr. Ruskin has pointed out, it can only exist on condition of being constantly renewed. I refer to what he calls the 'leeside cloud,' and speaks of as 'one of the most beautiful phenomena of the Alps.'

'When a moist wind,' he says, 'blows in clear weather over a cold summit, it has not time to get chilled as it approaches the rock, and therefore the air remains clear, and the sky bright on the windward side; but under the lee of the peak there is partly a back eddy, and partly still air; and in that lull and eddy the wind gets time to be chilled by the rock, and the cloud appears as a boiling mass of white vapour rising continually with the return current to the upper edge of the mountain, where it is caught by the straight wind and partly torn, partly melted away in broken fragments.'

A very frequent incident in northern mountainous scenery is when a great cloud, not properly a crest-cloud, happens to be pierced by the

Clouds on Ben Cruachan. *That to the spectator's left is creeping on towards the right, the thinnest part being the advancing arm of the cloud. The other cloud is rising up towards the crest and trailing its skirt on the mountain side.*

This is what I call the periwig cloud, for want of a more poetical name. The dark crest of Ben Anea *emerges from it. Such clouds have exactly the lie and the fall of a wig about the head and shoulders of a mountain.*

crest of a mountain and to remain above it for a long time as if it were fixed there by the peak, like a balloon caught by the top of a tree. I have often been struck by the curious persistence of these clouds. They are very big, voluminous things, but rarely add to the beauty or picturesque availableness of the mountain to which they attach themselves. Another form of cloud, which is not the crest-cloud, yet has something to do with the appearance of a mountain, is the roof-cloud which appears of infinite extent as it covers the sky from horizon to horizon, and is just low enough to be pierced by the summits of the mountains which are, as it were, decapitated by it. There is no beauty whatever in this cloud, which is merely a vast veil that hides the sky like the velaria in a Roman amphitheatre, and it injures the mountains by diminishing them. Nevertheless, there is a certain sense in which it may be said to suggest an idea of grandeur, since the earth becomes under that cloud a sort of temple with mountains to support its roof, an idea that seems to have struck Shelley, as we find it expressed, with powerful brevity, in the fifth stanza of his immortal 'Cloud':—

'Sunbeam proof, I hang like a roof,
The mountains its columns be.'

The bad weather for which the Highlands of Scotland have such an unfortunate and, I fear, merited reputation, is highly favourable to the beauty and interest of mountains, not only by producing the most splendid effects, but also because the motion of clouds and showers, the flying shadows cast by the clouds, and the semi-transparent veils interposed by the showers, give such an aspect of animation to the landscape that it is difficult to think of it as unconscious and not alive. And indeed, in sober truth, all this motion and change, these alternations of sunshine and shadow, of bright blue sky and dim rainfalls, the flash and foam of waterfall on the mountain and anger of dark wave, white-crested, upon the lake, all these motions and energies are manifestations of that ceaseless natural energy, that great active power of the universe, which does not by any means confine itself to the actions of living creatures. To those who accuse landscape-students of neglecting humanity for dead matter the answer is that we see motions that are both swifter and on a far larger scale than the massing of armies, whilst the power manifested is one with which no human strength, however combined and organized, can sustain the slightest comparison. The mere beauty of the effects produced excels the triumphs of the most ingenious theatrical contrivances. At one time a mass of rock and

forest is glittering in full sunshine, with all its colours fresh and every detail clear, a minute or two afterwards it has become a grey phantom with a dim outline, removed to a greater distance, and separated from the world of substantial things. Contrast succeeds to contrast, by a series of astonishing counter-changes; the things that were dim have become brilliantly clear, the things that were so plain have become vague, and ghostly, and remote, like the fading impressions of uncertain memory. The colour is bright and pure, with fresh green lights on field and forest, and purple shadows on heather and rock, the distances pass away into the loveliest greys, the most delicate azures, the flying clouds are of a dazzling whiteness, the sky bluer than lapis lazuli. It is all life and movement, splendour and glitter; and now if you wish to realise how much this life of nature may be to us, think what the world might be without it, if it resembled the limbo so sadly and exquisitely described by Casimir Delavigne, in which the great element of melancholy was precisely the privation of these changes:—

'Partout cette demi-clarté
Dont la morne tranquillité
Suit un crépuscule d'été,
Ou de l'aurore
Fait pressentir que le retour
Va poindre au céleste séjour
Quand la nuit n'est plus, quand le jour
N'est pas encore!

'Ce ciel terne, où manque un soleil,
N'est jamais bleu, jamais vermeil;
Jamais brise, dans ce sommeil
De la nature
N'agita d'un frémissement
La torpeur de ce lac dormant
Dont l'eau n'a point de mouvement,
Point de murmure.'

The reason why mountains are so good for the exhibition of varied effects is because they are on such a large scale. A cathedral is a big object and it gives some effects; one tower may be in light whilst another is in shadow, or one end of the vast building may appear remote in mist, or the west front may be golden in the mellow light of afternoon, or flushed with the crimson glow of sunset. The artist who sits down to paint architecture is at the same time tormented and delighted by the continual changes in the illumination. A statue is at one minute in full sunshine, but soon a shadow steals upon it and some

other piece of sculpture that lay hidden in the obscurity of the penumbra has come forth into unexpected prominence. The mountain of masonry becomes mysterious in the twilight, and in the early morning it is seen stately, pale, and grey by the peasants in a hundred fields. But what are all these changes in comparison with the revolutions that occur in the aspects of a vast mountain, itself a world, with forests on its flanks, an arctic region on its icy heights, and room for a dozen different storms to disport themselves in thunder? The mere vastness of scale in a mountain produces atmospheric effects of inexhaustible interest and variety. On one part of it the detail may be all discernible, whilst on more distant parts it passes away, first into mystery, and then into a broad space of colour without other detail than its own changes and gradations. In the soft and misty light great rays of sunshine may be cast across, these being always caused by the intervention of some other mountain or by the edge of a massive cloud. Sometimes an isolated mountain may itself interrupt the light of the low sun in such a way as to cast rays into the misty air.

The degree of mist in the atmosphere has more to do with the visibility of detail than the presence of the sun, as details may still be visible clearly for a little time after sunset if the air happens to be transparent. It has often been a subject of curious remark to me that *real* clearness (which can always easily be tested by the visibility of known objects on a mountain) is such a very different thing from brightness of light. I have often known the atmosphere to be marvellously clear on a dull day and tested it by examining details on a distant hill, whilst nothing is more common than bright days that seem clear enough till you begin to look for distant detail when you ascertain that it is lost in unsuspected haze. Mont Blanc, as visible or not visible from the Saône, is an excellent test of atmospheric clearness. The days when you see it do not seem to be clearer than many others, but of course they must be so. The days when you cannot see it at all often seem to be absolutely clear, but of course they cannot be so. On those falsely lucid days that cheat you like false frankness in mankind I have often looked at the place where I had seen Mont Blanc as plainly as I ever saw the moon, and, though knowing it to be there, could hardly believe that it had not gone wandering away like a planet. It disappears like Aladdin's palace, and you may rub your eyes as the Sultan did on a fine morning, but no rubbing will bring it back again. Yet the deceptive sky seems as honest and open as if it were in a picture by Perugino.

After the energetic life of a mountain, when the clouds have shattered themselves upon it vainly, and hurricanes have raged about its summits, and thunder has pealed and lightning played along its precipices, there may come a time of peace or truce, and with it the ineffable clearness of a purified atmosphere at evening. There is nothing that is familiar to me in nature more tranquillising to the human spirit than this clearness in dying light. The darkness comes on steadily, but the clearness still remains. If we fail to see the details in the deepening shade, the line against the sky becomes more and more sharply defined. The stars that were dim, unfixed points at first shine with an increasing brightness, and the dark peak rises amongst them as if it were nearer to them than it is. The poetry of this association between the peak that seems so high in heaven and the stars that look like fire-flies just above it has been felt for thousands of years, and is, indeed, one of those associations that are inherently and everlastingly poetical, because they have a profound analogy with the processes of the human mind. We climb as high as we can upon the eminences of thought that are accessible to us, but they are dark eminences still, even when most clear, most free from storm and cloud; but we have at least this nobility in our nature, that we can be aware of the lights that shine above our darkness.

CHAPTER XXI.

On Scale in Lake Scenery.

THERE are few things in the world so dependent upon mere size as lakes are for the effect which they produce upon the mind. In buildings the effect increases with the size, and however large a building may be, it still produces the effect of being a building. A large castle is a castle still, a vast cathedral is a cathedral still. So in human genius a great poet is still a poet, his poetical greatness does not promote him into another order of humanity; but however paradoxical it may seem, a great lake by the mere fact of its greatness loses all the characteristics of a lake, and becomes an inland sea.

It is the same with the effects of diminution. In buildings diminution produces, no doubt, a loss of power over the spectator, but a building keeps the name which is borne by larger ones of the same character. For example, we say the pyramid of Cheops and that of Caius Cestius are both pyramids, we say that the cathedrals of St. Paul and St. Asaph are both cathedrals, we call the royal house at Windsor a castle, and the same word is applied to the little feudal keeps in the Highlands of Scotland that would not contain a hundredth part of the room there is in Windsor; but if a lake is small, we call it a tarn when it is natural, and a pond when it is artificial.

We see, then, that a lake loses its lacustrine quality and title alike by bigness and littleness, and the reason is not hard to find, for the idea associated with a lake is the idea of a certain peculiar kind of beauty which is lost both in size and in smallness.

I have sometimes amused myself by thinking what a very interesting lake the Mediterranean would be if the scale of it could be so reduced as to give a breadth of about fifteen miles from Marseilles to Algiers. It has all the characteristics of lake scenery in great perfection, except that it is too big. It has a most varied coast-line, a great number of beautiful islands, with capes, bays, promontories, peninsulas, so delightfully arranged that it would be charming to explore them. Sardinia would then be five miles long, Sicily about the same, and the smaller islands of the Ægean would be like the islets of our Scottish and Irish lakes. This would be a great improvement from the artistic point of

view, but I should not bargain for a corresponding reduction in the heights of all the mountains. We should still require good mountainous distances.

The Mediterranean, such as it exists, is the finest salt-water loch in the world, but there is an enclosed sea in the far East which has much more of the character of lake scenery, though geographers would not call it a lake or fiord, because it has outlets at both ends. In their language, I suppose, the Japanese Inland Sea ought to be simply described as a channel, but it is a channel of most various width, and the view is so constantly enclosed by many promontories and three thousand islands that, with the mountainous distances, the effect must be that of a long succession of lakes.

There is a lake in Africa which is not called a lake simply because the river that enters and leaves it is of a large size. Stanley Pool, on the Congo, is twenty-five miles long and sixteen broad. It has all the characteristics of lake scenery — such as picturesque islands and fine mountainous distances, and would, no doubt, have been called a lake if its river had been of less importance.

Great expanses of water are called lakes when the water is fresh, though they would have been called seas if it had been salted. I need scarcely observe that the 'common salt, sulphate and carbonate of lime, magnesia, soda, potash, and iron,' which, as Maury tells us, are 'the distinguishing characteristics of sea-water,' have no effect upon the prospect except so far as they may sometimes be unfavourable to vegetation. I need not observe that fresh water rises in waves as dangerous as those of salt water, or that to be out of sight of land on a 'lake' is much the same as to be out of sight of land on the salt sea.

On the 'Lake of the Woods' Captain Huyshe says that Colonel Wolseley and some other members of the Red River Expedition were confined for some time upon an island by the fury of the great waves.

'To the westward not a sign of land broke the vast expanse of water stretching away to the horizon, as if it had been the ocean itself, instead of an inland lake in the centre of a continent; to the northward a "traverse" of ten miles to the nearest island lay before us, with the "white horses" rearing their angry heads and forbidding all hope of a speedy release from our little prison.'

At length they leave Detention Island, and although they are only rowing on a fresh-water lake, they might just as well be out upon the Irish Sea or the Mediterranean.

'It was a bright, cloudless night, with a full moon, and the men with light hearts and strong hands pulled with a will, glad to get away from their island

prison. To the west and north no land was to be seen, to the east we could just make out the dim outline of a belt of islands several miles away, and behind us the island we had left was soon lost to view. We steered by the stars, shaping our course by the pointers of the Great Bear. Although the wind had gone down there was still a heavy sea—a long, rolling swell from the N.W., which justified the refusal of the cautious Iroquois to venture out in their frail birch-bark canoe. After three hours' hard rowing we came to an island, where we put ashore at 1 a.m., made a big fire, and bivouacked till daylight. To me it had been a novel and curious sensation, which I enjoyed immensely; steering a boat at night by the stars, out of sight of land, on a fresh-water lake, is not possible everywhere.'

Lake Superior is a vast fresh-water sea, on which the steamers soon get so completely out of sight of land, and amongst waves of such dimensions, that the feeling is that of being on the ocean. 'Lake scenery' indeed! Why, even a single bay of Lake Superior is too big for lacustrine beauty. I need only refer to Thunder Bay, in which, although the features of the land are not without grandeur, the vastness of the water area takes so much away from them that they produce but little effect. In the following interesting description Captain Huyshe does not fail to notice this natural consequence of vastness :—

'Thunder Bay, of itself an enormous lake, is but one of the numerous bays which indent the northern shore of Lake Superior. It runs in a N.N.E. direction for some twenty or more miles, and is from twelve to sixteen miles wide. In these regions everything is on such a gigantic scale that the effect of picturesque beauty is marred. The eye has to travel so far that it loses the idea of the picturesque in that of the grand, and can scarcely realise the enormous height of the hills, owing to the great distance from which they are beheld. Looking from the western shores of the bay, the promontory sixteen miles off seems but like an ordinary hill; it is only when passing close beneath it, and looking up at it from the deck of a vessel, that the mind can form an adequate conception of its vast dimensions, and appreciate its solemn grandeur.'

Sheets of water alter even in the character of their own surfaces by size. However violent may be the wind that passes over a small tarn it produces only a ripple, 'a tempest in a tea-cup;' but as the lake gradually increases in size the waves increase with it, till you have those of the great American or African lakes, which are enormous. In this way the increase of dimensions causes lakes to lose the character of apparent safety and amenity that they have when on a small scale, and gives them in stormy weather a character of stern violence not generally associated with lake scenery by those who are unfamiliar with it.

The size of lakes has a remarkable effect upon their shores. A mountainous shore diminishes in importance as the lake increases in area. The peculiarly terrible character of Loch Coruisk, in the Isle of Skye, is due to the fact that the water surface is small in proportion

to the height of the precipitous mountains that surround it, and it looks much smaller than it is. Macculloch describes it as follows :—

'A lake, that seems to be about two miles in length, occupies the middle; its still waters appearing black as jet from the shadow of the surrounding mountains. On all sides, the rocky faces of the including mountains rise with a rapid ascent—rude, brown, and bare. So steep and sudden is the acclivity, that, at one glance, you see the whole face of the mountains from the foot to the summit; a continued irregular plane of solid rock, rising upwards on all hands for more than a mile, and presenting a barrier over which there is no egress.'

The reader at once perceives that the awfulness of Loch Coruisk is caused by its being small enough to be shut up by its surrounding mountains as in a prison. They keep the sunshine out, they narrow the sky, they circumscribe the starry heaven. The dark lake lies in the bottom of a pit, and you see it all at once without any hope of turning a corner and getting into broader waters with a more open view. The scene is so depressing that it is unfit for human habitation; the healthiest mind would be overwhelmed by it.

And yet the mountains round Loch Coruisk are not of any extraordinary elevation. Many a lake reflects higher summits in its waters. The larger the lake-area the less does it matter how lofty may be its shores. On Lake Superior it matters hardly anything, the shore being generally either diminished by distance or else made invisible altogether, whilst if the sailor has the coast near him on one side he has the open lake, to the eye unlimited as an ocean, on the other. Even if Lake Superior were surrounded by far higher ranges than Loch Coruisk, if it could have the Rocky Mountains clasped round it like a belt, they would not, with all their summits, produce that effect of gloomy imprisonment which at Coruisk has such an awful effect upon the mind. The waves of the great lake would still roll and break in the unimpeded sunshine, the eye would still range over an area limited by the water-line of the horizon, the vast sky would still display all the glory of sunrise and sunset, and the mariner on that broad inland sea would watch the great moving dome of stars.

A lake is never too small to be an object of interest to artists. One of the commonest titles for a landscape in French art is 'une Mare,' a little marshy pond or puddle often only a few yards in diameter. Small as it may be, it is still big enough to reflect the rocks or trees that stand around it; and is therefore as important in a picture as a looking-glass is in a room. Diaz, Corot, Theodore Rousseau, and a host of others, have painted such tiny ponds with quite a tender affection. They are lake scenery in its very humblest form.

Has it ever occurred to the reader that what we call a pool in a river is really a little lake if the current is hardly perceptible? Let me attempt to describe one of these as an example of a true lake on a small scale. It is on the river Arroux, one of the tributaries of the Loire. After rather a tumultuous course of about three miles through a rocky channel, the river suddenly falls asleep in a long rock-basin, which, if not of great breadth, is still three or four times as broad as the ordinary stream. Both sides of the pool are guarded by rocky shores, one of them being steep and richly wooded. In the pool there is an islet, and at its western extremity a beautiful island with rocks, heather, and Scotch firs, so exactly like the Highlands that one might fancy it had been transported from Loch Katrine or Loch Awe.

I despair of conveying to any reader who has not been a canoeist the least idea of the charm that belongs to such a place as this. Really to appreciate it one must have come down the dangerous rapids above, and felt the sudden change from the tormenting waywardness of rushing currents and the awkward obtrusiveness of a thousand obstacles to the peace of deep and tranquil waters where effort ceases and anxiety is at an end. If the effect of peacefulness is increased by the state of the atmosphere and the hour of the day, it becomes strong enough to attune the feelings like a poem. I remember arriving at that pool many years ago on a calm evening in summer, when the last rays of the sun were glaring through the woods and brightening the rocks on the opposite shore, the long pool itself lying in shaded peace and reflecting everything like a mirror. Lazy strokes of the paddle impelled the canoe gently over the beautiful surface, and there was nothing to break the solitude but the flapping of a heron's wings as he rose slowly from shade to sunshine.

Here, then, you have the characteristics of a lake, but all in miniature. Now suppose that the pool could be greatly increased in size, by the subsidence of one of its shores, and that the shores themselves could be hollowed into bays and inlets, we should have something not much unlike one of the smaller lochs in the Scottish Highlands, such as Loch Avich, for example. It appears, then, that the difference between a pool and a lake is simply a difference of size, but of size relatively to the river. If that pool on the Arroux had been fed by a tiny, trickling rivulet it would have been called at least an '*étang*,' equivalent to *tarn* or *pond;* and we have already alluded to a case where a pool on a great river is called a pool on account of the importance of the river, though it is a lake of noble dimensions and good lacustrine scenery.

Any sheet of water, however small or large, has its own artistic interest, but the nature of that interest differs greatly with extent of surface. A small pond is valuable chiefly for its reflections and for the variety that water gives to a foreground; but when a lake is a mile wide and three or four miles long, certain interesting and remarkable appearances are produced upon its surface by breezes and winds of various degrees of strength, and these appearances are not produced upon small ponds. They will be described at some length in a chapter on Lake Surfaces. Finally, when a lake attains very great dimensions the interest of it becomes strictly marine, except that it has no tide.

When 'Lake Scenery' is usually spoken of, it is intended to imply that the sheet of water is large enough for pleasure navigation, and not so large as to cause any difficulty in seeing the opposite shore, in ordinary states of the weather. The English and Scottish lakes answer to this idea, and so do many lakes on the Continent; but those of Geneva and Constance and the Venern lake in Sweden are already too large for the perfection of the true lake character. Lucerne avoids the fault of excessive size by being happily divided into several parts, which are, in fact, different lakes connected by channels, and are called so by the inhabitants. The bifurcation of the Lake of Como at Bellaggio really makes three lakes of it, including Lecco. There are three lakes also in that of Lugano, and three in Loch Awe. Loch Long bifurcates exactly as Como does. Even the Lake of Geneva, notwithstanding the simplicity of its plan, is divided by the inhabitants into two — *le Grand Lac* and *le Petit Lac*, the point of separation between the two being the promontory called *la pointe d'Yvoire*, nearly opposite Nyon. From Geneva the Grand Lac is not visible. In Lough Corrib (Ireland) there is also a great lake connected with a smaller one. The well-known Lake George, in the state of New York, is divided into two parts by the 'Narrows,' which are also apparently obstructed by islands. Lake Champlain, in its broad northern part, is divided by long islands and a promontory, whilst the narrow southern part turns a little westwards and makes, no doubt, a separate lake so far as the view is concerned. A very good instance of division in a lake would be the Balkash lake in Turkestan, but here the scale is so enormous that even the parts themselves must exceed what we mean by lake scenery. The Balkash has, however, its narrows, exactly as in Lake George, and it has a small lake at the south-western end of it, just as Loch Awe has the little harbour-tarn at Ford communicating with the main lake by a narrow neck of water.

These geographical facts are so important in their connexion with the effect of lake scenery on the eye and the mind, that it is a great

though a common mistake to overlook them. A great lake is not inconveniently great, from the artistic point of view, when it always presents the appearance of a small one, or a succession of small ones. There are, in fact, no lakes so interesting as those which do not show too much of themselves at once, but allure the traveller from one beautiful scene to another without ever wearying his mind by too wide a prospect. The perfect lake, as to size, is that which shows a width varying from one to five miles, with reaches not exceeding a length of eight or ten. The longer the entire lake is the better, if its length is concealed by windings.

So far as size and the shape of its plan are concerned, the most perfect lake known to me is Lucerne, but it is inferior to some others in certain qualities, which may be more appropriately discussed in other chapters.

Finally, it may be observed that clearness of climate has something to do with the size of lakes, as when the air is clear a distant coast may be easily seen. In misty countries it is desirable that the lakes should be comparatively narrow. In our own climate distances are often magnificently exaggerated by mist, and as mountains gain greatly in apparent height when the weather is hazy, our lakes seem broader than they are and our mountains higher exactly at the same time. On the other hand, when a lake is really very wide and a mountain really very high, perfectly clear weather will produce an astonishing illusion. A width of ten miles will look like a twenty minutes' row, and masses of rock as big as a large church will appear to be three feet square.*

* *Deceptiveness of Nature as to Scale.*—Nature is often like St. Peter's at Rome, which looks only moderately large until the visitor has begun to realise the bigness of what would be little details elsewhere. To make us understand the size of architectural works draughtsmen are in the habit of giving us the figure of a man to judge by, and so we come to understand the size of such a building as the front of Notre Dame. In natural scenery man is not always to be had, or he may be too small to be visible, and then we have perhaps nothing to go by but stones, which may themselves be a hundred times larger than we think. Even the most experienced are liable to be deceived in this way. Here is a very good instance of such deception from Macculloch, who was sailing at the time on a revenue cutter, himself an experienced traveller and geologist, and his companions professional sailors, whose especial business it was to know the coast of Scotland. He is off the coast of Skye.

'Often deceived in judging of magnitude and distance on these western shores, I recollect no place where we experienced more surprise. We had left the vessel to row to the shore, which every one thought was a mile off. That mile was not less than eight or nine; it cost us three hours of hard exertion. As we approached I saw a stony beach, which seemed to admit of landing, and which appeared about a hundred yards long. The landing being effected the crew soon disappeared among stones which they had purposed to convert into ballast, and it required the labour of an hour to traverse the imaginary hundred yards, which were not less than a mile and a half.'

CHAPTER XXII.

Lake Shores.

WE so commonly associate lakes with mountains that we readily forget the existence of the flat-shored lakes which, nevertheless, have often a certain beauty of their own.

The most opposite characters may be acceptable in the shores of lakes, provided only that there is a decided character of some kind. Modern Dutch artists even appreciate the flat shores of the lakes in Holland which in the first enthusiasm for mountains attendant upon the awakening of the landscape sentiment would have been despised as altogether devoid of interest. In the Dutch lakes the sky becomes of very great importance, and all objects of any height, such as trees, cottages, windmills, distant towers, and the sails of boats, detach themselves against it in a manner that greatly enhances their interest, whilst the variety of their groupings affords just that degree and kind of change that amuses the mind without exciting or fatiguing it. A green shore coming close to water without any intervening barrenness of sand or shingle is in itself delightful, and a sedgy or marshy spot here and there is a variety after fertile pastures. The mere feeling of openness to the wind is a charm in flat-shored lakes, especially to a lover of sailing who has not to fear the alternation of dead calms and gusty squalls that trouble the sailor amongst mountains. The degree in which flat-shored waters have gained in favour amongst the lovers of landscape during the last twenty years is shown by the wonderfully increased fame of the Norfolk Broads. In my early days nobody had ever heard of them, at the present day their existence, at least, is as well known as that of the mountain-lakes, and they are visited every year by many artists and other lovers of aquatics and the picturesque. This tendency to recognise the merits of comparatively humble scenery is, I think, a sign of increasing culture of those faculties by which landscape beauty is appreciated. The uncultivated sense answers only to a violent stimulus. A huge mountain is big enough to make its presence remarked by a dull tourist, but the tones of a delicate distance, or the changes of composition in trees, and sails, and villages, with the

THE SILVER STRAND, LOCH KATRINE

Painted by HORATIO MACCULLOCH, R.S.A.

Reproduced in Photogravure by *T. & R. ANNAN*

National celebrities in art always come with a strange effect on those who are quite outside of the nation. Macculloch is as celebrated in Scotland as any landscape-painter can be; that is to say, as celebrated as Corot and Daubigny are in France, or Turner in England: but it is strictly a national reputation. Macculloch had an enviable existence in this respect, that he interpreted the landscape he loved best in a manner that was understood and appreciated by his countrymen. The beauty of the Highlands strikes us in different ways. Macculloch's rendering of it is (so far as I know his works) always graceful and intelligible, and by no means deficient in artistic qualities, though I do not remember that he ever dealt with the profoundly melancholy and tragic aspects of Highland landscape.

varieties of their colour, are comparatively gentle stimulants, like quiet harmonies in music.

The humbler kind of lake scenery is so refreshing as a relief from the overwhelming influence of the sublime that it is a great merit in a lake to have both varieties. Nothing is more agreeable than the gradual increase of stimulus in passing from the sort of scenery that unobservant people condemn for its dulness to scenery of a more exciting kind, which we then appreciate with far keener enjoyment than if we had come upon it suddenly at the first. Loch Lomond and Loch Awe are both excellent examples of graduated interest, and so in a minor degree is Windermere. At the southern extremity of Loch Lomond the mountains are as yet too remote to be powerful, and the great extent of the lake is concealed by its clustered islands; but as you go northwards the mountains increase in apparent grandeur, and every mile reveals new sublimities and unexpected combinations, till at last the lake narrows and you go into the very heart of the mountains themselves. A voyage on Loch Awe has the advantage that in its beginning you cannot see its sublimer scenery at all. You begin (or ought to begin) in the little basin at Ford, a small round tarn entirely sheltered by steep little hills, with an outlet only just sufficient to let your boat pass, and after that you have a long reach of scenery that is not exciting till you get towards Ardhonnel and are beginning to feel rather weary of the monotonous loch-sides, when suddenly you get a distant view of the Cruachan range, its pale grey peaks rising above their belt of cloud, and from that moment there is a constant increase of stimulus till you come under the shadow of Ben Cruachan itself and see the pass of Brandir opening its gloomy outlet, and before you, at the end of the narrowed waters, stand the grey ruins of Kilchurn.

The Lake of Lucerne has some variety also; that part of it which is near the town is not so much shut in by lofty mountains as the Bay of Uri; still there is too much sublimity about Lucerne itself to afford any complete repose, any perfect contrast. It is a strange objection to make, but the truth is, that the lake of the Four Cantons is too uniformly sublime, you cannot quietly sail away from the grand scenery when you have enough of it, and in some parts the stern magnificence of the shores is really oppressive. The separate reaches are apparently enclosed by their mountains, so that it requires an effort of memory when you are in the Bay of Uri not to feel shut out from the world by the pathless precipices around. The association of the place with heroic legends*

* Legends which modern criticism is removing from history to leave to poetry and the opera.

gives it a brighter aspect than that of our tragedy-haunted Glen Coe, but the scenery is equally desolate. I can imagine few situations more appalling, in lake navigation, than that of a boatman in the Bay of Uri who gets caught by the terrible south wind, the Foehn, and is driven on foaming billows between those iron-bound shores. In Great Britain we have nothing comparable to it, unless it be the eastern reach of Loch Hourn, which I have never visited. From the descriptions of others we know that 'the land on both sides is not only very lofty, but very rapid in the acclivities,' whilst the water is narrow in comparison with its enclosing walls, and the scenery wild, desolate, and inhospitable.* Mr. Black's description of Loch Hourn in *White Wings* has for its purpose rather the concentration of the reader's attention on the little group of persons in the yacht, cosily comfortable and sociable in their little floating island in the midst of a great margin of solitude, than the production of an effect of terror. Nevertheless, the master of the yacht did not cease to represent 'that in the event of bad weather coming on we should find ourselves in the lion's jaws. . . . . As the strange darkness of the loch increased, as these vast mountains overhanging the inner cup of the loch grew more and more awful in the gloom, we began to understand why the Celtic imagination had called this place the Lake of Hell.'

Wast-water, in the English Lake district, would have an equally terrible character if the size of it were greater and if both sides were equally precipitous; but it is like the small lake in Glen Coe, one side only is steep enough to be awful, so that the mind escapes, as it were, on the other, being conscious of it even when it is not seen. The want of size in these lakes is a defect fatal to perfect awfulness, as we do not dread the ripples on a pond, but a storm becomes really terrible when it rushes down through a corridor of gigantic mountains and concentrates all its fury on a space of water large enough to be lashed into white waves.

The pleasantest lake shores have many bays and inlets where a boat may take refuge when hard-pressed. The bays themselves should not be very big, or else they become lakelets, or even lakes, which we have seen to be the case with that vast Thunder Bay in Lake Superior, which has an area equal to several Scottish lakes together.

Even in the Lake of Lucerne the Bay of Alpnach is the only one that accurately answers to the name. Küssnacht is a long inlet, and what the English call the Bay of Uri is really a lake of itself. The ideal

* Macculloch's *Highlands and Islands.* Vol. II.

of a lake bay is a space of between twenty and a hundred acres of water, open so as to give easy access to the lake, but sheltered from the prevailing winds. The land enclosing it ought to be high enough to keep it calm and snug, and if it is richly wooded the effect of shelter and comfort is increased. To cast anchor in such a bay is in itself a pleasure, and to sleep there on board your boat, in the most perfect security, whilst a storm-wind is raging outside, is enough to make you regard that particular bay with quite a tender affection ever afterwards. A lake bay has all the charms of a tiny lake or tarn with a feeling of liberty that you never have on a mere pond, for whenever you feel disposed to leave you can get out of your place of refuge, with the wind or against it. The grander scenery is perhaps hidden by the natural screens of your retreat, but this only adds to the general feeling of repose. I remember certain bays, in very noble lakes, where there is hardly anything to be seen but a bit of woody hill or a rough and stony slope, yet they are charming little corners to rest in, and the mind is perfectly contented, when in a restful mood, with the quiet surroundings that would be commonplace without the ever-poetical water.

A wide lake sometimes gets narrower and narrower as it enters some gorge amongst the mountains, and this effect of narrowing, when the shores become steeper and more threatening, has such a power over the imagination that even the least fanciful people are alive to it. The two best examples known to me are the upper end of Loch Lomond and the Pass of Brandir on Loch Awe, by which the overflow of the lake finds its outlet to Loch Etive and the sea. The effect of such places is enhanced by the state of the water, which is generally either of a gloomy and sullen calm, looking dark and dangerous under the shadow of the enclosing precipices, or else angry under a rushing wind that sweeps through the narrow passage, often with unexpected fury. To feel the weird influence of such a place in all its potency the reader should go the whole length of it at night, by himself, and in a very small boat. The comfort and security of a steamer, as well as the size of it (which takes up too much space in the foreground of the picture), are too good a protection against the influences of nature. I have sometimes been in the Pass of Brandir when the gloom of that remarkable place penetrated my mind with such an all-pervading sadness, such a feeling of profound solemnity and awe, that I can compare it to nothing but the reading of Dante. The black water, known to be so deep, the frowning precipices on one side and the huge bulk of Cruachan on the other, dark clouds passing between the boat and the stars, and fitful

wailing gusts filling the uncertain sail and driving the cutwater with a hiss through the perilous channel, these are influences not to be easily resisted or speedily forgotten. It is not exactly fear that they produce, or one would not seek them voluntarily, but they attune the nervous system to a pitch of imaginative tension that makes the trivial and the mean drop away from us and brings us into the presence of the eternal.*

The beauty of lake-shores, as compared with those of the ocean, is greatly enhanced by the closeness with which the vegetation approaches to the water. As there are no tides, and as there is nothing in the water itself destructive to vegetable life, but much, on the contrary, that is favourable to it, the result is often a degree of richness close to the water's edge far more agreeable than the barrenness of the sea-beach as we know it in northern latitudes.† Trees grow freely on the rocks, and in many a park-like glade the fresh, green grass may be seen gently washed by the ripples of some quiet bay, whilst if the level of the water rises a little after rain you may see the blades half submerged, just their sharp points out, and the white petals of the daisies washed by the miniature breakers. On such a shore a boat lands softly even when her approach is swift. Her keel glides gently over the grass, and the motion is stayed so gradually that you hardly know when it comes to an end. In many a place the pendulous boughs stoop over the water, sometimes coming so near to its surface that the waves catch the lower leaves and play with them. Even in Scotland, where the sea-coast is so bleak, so dreary and barren, the shores of the fresh-water lakes are often indescribably rich in vegetation, not everywhere, but in parts. The shore of Loch Lomond abounds in these exquisite meetings of lovely water and luxuriant vegetation. Macculloch said of it long since :—

'Had it no other beauties than those of its shores, it would still be an object of prime attraction; whether from the bright green meadows sprinkled with luxurious ash-trees, that sometimes skirt its margin, or the white pebbled shores on which its gentle billows murmur, like a miniature ocean, or its bold, rocky promontories rising from the deep water, rich in wild flowers and ferns, and tangled

* I imagine that the railway from Oban through the Pass of Brandir must have had a destructive effect on the particular power of the scenery alluded to in the text, but the carriage-road had that already in a minor degree. Every visible facility for communication is destructive to the effect of desolate grandeur because it suggests at once that the conveniences of civilisation are accessible.

† There are exceptions, however, even in the north, which will be noticed in their place.

with wild roses and honeysuckles, or its retired bays where the waves sleep, reflecting, like a mirror, the trees which hang over them; an inverted and softened landscape.'

The same writer speaks with enthusiasm of 'one of Loch Lomond's most common features: the rich and graceful ash-trees hanging over the margin, and rooting themselves in the very wash of the silvery waves, while the bright expanse of water glistens between their trunks and through the intervals of their drooping foliage.'

A lake of the finest and most complete kind supplies in itself almost all the geographical interest of the Mediterranean, and the smallness of the scale on which the parts are reproduced makes the contrast between them the more striking. Headlands jut into the little sea and show a bold front to its rage. In some places the rock goes down sheer into the deep; in others there are delicate sands, sloping gently down into the clear water, fit bathing-places for the fairest lady ever imagined by the daring fancy of a poet. Then you have the mouths of many streams that come to lose themselves in the lake exactly as the great rivers flow into the all-receiving ocean. The lake is the ocean to them, they know not that there is any other, and they come softly or angrily to the same end. Sometimes, like the Nile or the Rhone, the little lake-river has its delta in its own small plain of alluvial deposit. Everywhere the great sea is reproduced in the little one, and there are times even when to complete the illusion a mist prevents you from seeing across your small Scottish Mediterranean, and you may fancy that the unseen opposite shore is some far-distant land. As there may be in some small planet, like Vesta, a miniature of the physical geography of the Earth, so may a lake no bigger than Derwentwater be like the reduced model of some extensive inland sea.

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CHAPTER XXIII.

Lake Islands.

AN island is produced simply by the emergence of a hill-top; but who ever thinks of the wide-spreading, sub-aqueous foundation? For the poet an island is a bit of enchanted land, defended by the water against the invasion of the prosaic and the commonplace; for the painter it is a bit of ground so situated as to be more frequently and completely mirrored than any other.

There is nothing in landscape nature so perfect as a lake-island of the loveliest kind. It is a detached being, a bit of ground so separated from the rest of the land that it has gained individuality like a living creature. Most readers will remember that exquisite little poem of Shelley, in which with a few sure touches he gives the main characteristics of such an isle in its summer glory:—

'There was a little lawny islet,
By anemone and violet,
Like mosaic, paven:
And its roof was flowers and leaves
Which the summer's breath enweaves,
Where nor sun, nor showers, nor breeze
Pierce the pines and tallest trees,—
Each a gem engraven:
Girt by many an azure wave,
With which the clouds and mountains pave
A lake's blue chasm.'

I think Shelley has here included all the beauties of a lake-island except one. It ought to have a bold little rocky precipice somewhere, showing a determined front to the waves in rough weather and glassing itself in the smooth water when it is calm. An island is all the more delightful for being itself a little hill or, still better, two small hills with a rich lawny valley between them, and its coast-line ought not to be too simple, but should have a decided promontory or two, and at least one little creek or bay. As for size there are excellent reasons why a lake-island should never be very big. A space of about thirty acres is enough, and more than enough for beauty. Inch Murrin on Loch Lomond is too important; it is a mile and a half long, and therefore

not conveniently seen as an object unless it could be detached from the other islands and exhibited quite by itself. One effect of islands is very little foreseen by us until we have had some experience of lakes. We fancy that because on looking at a map we recognise the insular character of a piece of land, that character will always be visible to us in nature; whereas if the island is large the shore of it will very likely appear to us nothing but the ordinary lake shore; and if there are many islands the consequence will be the subdivision of the water into many lakes, a fact clearly recognised in the Canadian name of the *Lac des Mille Lacs*, which Captain Huyshe thought should rather have been called the *Lac des Mille Îles*. It is clear, therefore, that if there may sometimes be too few islands (as in the Lake of Lucerne, where we have the solitary isle of Alstaad, neither large nor well situated, being, in fact, only the end of a spur of land separated from the mainland by a narrow channel), so, on the other hand, islands may easily be too numerous for the perfection of lacustrine scenery; they may, indeed, be so numerous as to cut up the water-space into small sections almost without any character of openness or grandeur of distant effect. Speaking of the Lac des Mille Lacs Captain Huyshe says:—

'The islands are of a peculiar nature. What looks to be one enormous island at a little distance resolves itself, on a nearer approach, to an infinity of smaller ones, which, separated only by narrow channels, overlap and fit into one another like the pieces of a Chinese puzzle, so that the traveller may wander on from one little lake to another for miles. Hence the name given to it by the Canadian *voyageurs*. Even the guides frequently lose themselves for a time, and the only safe way is to steer a course by compass, which our maps were sufficiently accurate to enable us to do.'*

The effect of islands in blocking the view was graphically described by Mr. John Macgregor in his *Rob Roy on the Baltic*. He had embarked by himself on the great lake Venern in squally and misty weather, not without considerable risk, and he soon found the islands embarrassing:—

'The numerous isles were so perplexing that I had to land, first upon Sande Isle, and then on several others, climbing each time some lonely peak to see where I ought to go. A small compass would have been useless here (and a large one I could not afford to carry), for the islands are in the way of your seeing them, just as you "cannot see the forest for the trees." Even on the Malar Lake, which is far smaller, there are fourteen hundred islands.

'The thick undergrowth and slippery moss on the islands made it tiring work

* *The Red River Expedition.* By Captain Huyshe. Chap. VII.

to climb them. . . . There was nothing for it but to climb once more, for it was absolutely necessary to find out the island of Onson among the numerous others in the Katt Fjord; and yet the only point that was unmistakable was the headland at the end of Hammaro, which stood out sharp on the far horizon of indigo blue.'

Mr. Macgregor would probably have lost his way altogether if he had not accidentally seen, in a glint of sunshine, a 'white puff from a steamer's funnel,' which he concluded must be in the direction of Carlstadt. In the same way Captain Huyshe lost himself amongst the islands in the Lake of the Woods, and only found his way again by catching sight of an Indian encampment:—

'After trying a few more likely openings to the northward in vain, the uncomfortable feeling began to creep over us that we had lost our way; however, there was nothing for it but to persevere, so on and on we blundered, hopelessly exploring every channel amongst the labyrinth of islands which appeared to lead in the right direction. We wandered on in this disagreeable way for hour after hour, until the sun began to get low in the sky and we were still as far off the river as ever. This portion of the Lake of the Woods is a mass of islands; in Lac des Mille Lacs and in Rainy Lake we thought we had seen a few islands, but anything to compare with the myriads in Lake of the Woods we had never before met with. We might have been wandering about amongst them to this day, had we not fortunately caught sight of an Indian encampment.'

Amongst the lakes most fortunate in their islands may be mentioned that of Bienne (near Neuchâtel) which possesses only two, but one of them, the *Île St. Pierre*, is a remarkably perfect example of everything that a lake island ought to be. It is well detached from the shore, being in the middle of the southern part of the lake, and it rises to a height of more than a hundred and thirty feet above its level. Rousseau, after living upon this island and conceiving an intense affection for it, described with enthusiasm the great variety of surface to be found in its limited area. He said that there were fields, vineyards, orchards, and woods, besides rich pastures shaded by trees and bordered with shrubs of many kinds, always well watered by the lake. Rousseau's favourite excursion was to cross from the larger to the smaller island, where he indulged at the same time his disposition to *rêverie* and that intense delight in the beauty of nature by which he was a forerunner of so many in our own time. In rough weather he remained on the Île de St. Pierre in a state of such deep contentment that he would willingly have accepted the fate of staying there till he died, and often afterwards he looked back with bitter regret to that island Paradise from which an official edict had expelled him.

It is quite as allowable to criticise the beauty of a lake as that of a human face, so I may observe that it is not every island that would deserve so much admiration as the Île de St. Pierre, and that some islands may even detract from the beauty of the waters that surround them. I cannot but think that Inishail is rather a misfortune for Loch Awe. It is a long piece of ordinary green land rising to a small knoll at its north-eastern extremity which is crowned with a poor little wood, and it impedes what might have been one of the finest views on the lake, that from Innistrynich down the Pass of Awe. When a lake is generally narrow its broadest part has a great importance on account of distant effects on extended surfaces of water, and it is therefore much to be regretted that it should be divided by a long piece of land. Inishail is really such an impediment, so that the lake would gain in beauty if it could quietly subside beneath the waves. Whilst we are imagining impossible changes I may observe that the peninsula of Innistrynich, which is now an island only during floods, and is one of the most beautifully varied bits of ground in Scotland, with its little rocky eminences, its slopes of verdure, its ancient oaks, and the picturesque indentations of its shore, would have adorned the lake still more effectually if it had been better detached from the mainland with the broad margin of water all round it that such a little masterpiece of Nature's art deserves. The other islands of Loch Awe are delightful spots of wild land, more or less happily situated, the very finest situation of all being occupied by the twin pair of isles called Fraoch Elan, which have bold little rocky cliffs and crowns of Scotch fir and ash, one of them bearing the ruins of a castle rather too much hidden in the abundant foliage. If the lake had really been planned for artistic purposes, Fraoch Elan would have been placed exactly where it is. I have passed those isles I know not how often, sometimes tearing by them in tempest when every branch was tossed wildly in the air and every leaf in a tumult of agitation, whilst the fierce short waves dashed themselves angrily against the rocks—sometimes in glassy calm the boat glided insensibly, when the sail hung so listlessly that it seemed impossible that there could be motion. I remember one night especially rowing on perfectly still water in misty moonlight when those isles came into view like phantoms and passed away into shadowy nothingness, looking as unsubstantial as a vision. It is hard, in words, to convey such an impression as that, for one needs the midnight silence, the absolute calm, the solitude in the middle of a great lake such as it was in those days, before the scream of an engine had been heard in the Pass of Awe.

The choice of lake-islands for defensive purposes appears to be a remnant of the pre-historic taste for lacustrine habitations standing on piles at a little distance from the shore. In Loch Awe the best example is the castle of Ardhonnel, which is built on a small rocky island close to the water's edge. The whole island makes a delightful study of reflections in calm weather, with the castle at one end and masses of foliage at the other. I need not do more than refer to Scott's description of the island in the *Lady of the Lake*, with the habitation upon it, that 'lodge of ample size, but strange of structure and device.' The idea that was dominant in Scott's mind when he wrote that famous description was to respect the wildness of surrounding natural beauty by making human work as little of an intrusion as possible, so the dwelling in which Douglas had taken refuge was roughly constructed from

> 'Such materials as around
> The workman's hand had readiest found.'

This was not only poetical, but in good taste. The danger of insular buildings is that they may spoil nature (easily spoiled everywhere, but especially in a tiny islet), without substituting that beauty of art which might have been an acceptable compensation. Southey said of St. Herbert's Isle on Derwentwater, 'How must the chapel have adorned that little isle, giving a human and religious character to the solitude!' Rogers alluded to the chapel in *The Pleasures of Memory*, and so gave Turner an opportunity of illustrating it by inventing rather a stately fane with very large windows strongly illuminated from the interior, and giving long reflections in the water.

> 'Their shifting sail dropt gently from the cove
> Down by St. Herbert's consecrated grove;
> Whence erst the chanted hymn, the tapered rite
> Amused the fisher's solitary night;
> And still the mitred window, richly wreathed,
> A sacred calm thro' the brown foliage breathed.'

In Turner's vignette the island is simply a base for the architecture, which is important enough to overpower it, there being nothing of nature visible but a few bushes. Even when an island-chapel has almost entirely disappeared, or left, as on Inishail, insignificant ruins, the association adds a wonderful poetry of its own, especially if there are ancient tombs. The sense of poetic appropriateness which has vaguely and unconsciously existed in the rudest nations and times has often led to the choice of lake-islands for purposes of interment, as if it were well that the dead should have a silent little kingdom of their own, severed

by a space of water from the conflicting interests and noisy occupations of the living.* When the dead are buried on an island there are touching funeral processions of boats that seem especially fitting for such a service. The reader may have felt, in reading poetical descriptions of a boat funeral or on seeing some picture of such a ceremony in Norway or Scotland, how very much more suitable is the equal gliding of a floating bier than the movement of the stateliest hearse on wheels. In 'The Passing of Arthur' the effect of solemnity and dignity is immensely enhanced by the employment of a floating couch for the pale king, who passes 'to the island valley of Avilion' on a black hull moving from the brink.

'Long stood Sir Bedivere
Revolving many memories, till the hull
Look'd one black dot against the verge of dawn,
And on the mere the wailing died away.'

The degree in which islands may be injured or improved by building upon them will have to be considered in another part of this volume in connexion with the effect of buildings in landscape generally. For the present it is enough to take note of the intrusion of man upon these gems of the natural world as a possible event in their history by which their entire character may be changed, nor is there anything of equal importance that could occur to them, unless it were the subsidence or elevation of the land.

* Island cemeteries are not unfrequently met with in Scotland, and their sites are believed to have been chosen in early times to keep the bodies from the wolves. There is one on St. Mungo's Island, in Loch Leven, another on an island in Loch Maree, another on Sanda, at the extremity of the Mull of Cantyre.

CHAPTER XXIV.

Lake Surfaces.

THE natural colouring of waters in large quantities is one of the most difficult subjects connected with landscape, because so few people are able to give reliable evidence on the subject. To be a good witness about the colour of water an observer should be able to distinguish clearly the hue belonging to the water itself from that which it borrows by reflection, and this is often difficult—the more difficult that the two colours are generally mixed so as to modify each other. It is impossible to get an opportunity of seeing the water *quite* unmodified by reflection, and there are times when reflection is so powerful that it almost completely subjugates the local colour of the water itself. In the accounts given by travellers of blue water, for example, I always feel very much in doubt about the quantity of blueness to be attributed to the sky. A brown Highland lake, which is a reservoir of peat-water, almost as brown as a glass of porter, in great depths, will look so fine a dark blue under certain effects of light and sky as to resemble a piece of lapis lazuli, and a traveller may say quite excusably—'We saw the dark-blue waters of Loch —— as we drove past it.' A wary observer knows how unsafe it is to trust to testimony of that kind. The testimony of painters—I mean their *painted* testimony—is still more untrustworthy, for the traveller will fearlessly tell you how anything seemed to him, but the painter will be preoccupied with ideas outside of any witnessing to the truth of nature. He will probably give the water the hue that 'does best' with the other parts of his picture, and if he is tempted to paint what he has really seen in nature he has the haunting fear that it may offend his public and make his work unsaleable. This impediment is the more to be regretted that painters ought to be our most valuable witnesses, as they cultivate the colour-sense to a degree of refinement entirely unknown in other occupations. A distinction may, however, be established between studies and pictures. The studies that an artist makes for himself, without any view to sale, are often quite reliable so far as his colour-sense may be relied upon.

It would be a great convenience to believe, as some critics appear

to do, in the absolute perfection of one's own colour-sense and the imperfection of the sense in others. This is a matter on which it is not easy to obtain any positive data, except in cases where the defect is so obvious as to amount to colour-blindness. Even eminent painters can hardly be infallible judges, as they always colour differently from each other, and they would generally be tempted, by their love for a beautiful result, to prefer colouring which was harmonious to that which was strictly true.

In what I may say about the colouring of water surfaces (a very important part of the subject) the reader will please understand in a general way (to spare the need of repetition) that I do not rely with any absolute faith either on my own sight or on that of others, but believe, on the contrary, that there is a peculiarity of idiosyncrasy in every case which makes colouring always a personal matter. It is, indeed, nothing but a sensation to which attention is consciously directed, and when we say that an artist colours truly, what we mean is that his colouring produces in us sensations like those we receive from nature. Nobody goes a step farther to inquire whether his eyes have reported nature to him accurately. A friend said to me the other evening, 'How blue the hills look!' They did not seem blue to me, but a warm grey in which blue existed along with other colours. It is therefore probable that we should have painted them differently, whilst it is certain that we should not have described them in the same terms. Yet both of us were right, as each gave an honest account of his own sensations, and colour is in each man's optic nerves and brain. Outside of a seeing organism there is no natural standard of colour that can be referred to.

Maury, in his description of the Gulf Stream, enters into the question of its colour, telling us that the waters of it, as far out from the Gulf as the Carolina coasts, are of an indigo blue, and 'so distinctly marked that their line of junction with the common sea water may be traced by the eye.' Here, then, is local colour of a very decided kind, and Maury accounts for it by a reference to the salt-works in France and on the shores of the Adriatic, where the salt is got in crystals by evaporation. 'The longer it is exposed to evaporation the salter it grows, and the deeper is the hue of its blue until crystallisation is about to commence, when the now deep-blue water puts on a reddish tint. Now the waters of the Gulf Stream are salter than the waters of the sea through which they flow, and hence we can account for the deep indigo blue which all navigators observe off the Carolina coasts.' The same writer goes on to speak of several varieties of colour in the ocean, of the 'light green

of the North Sea and other polar waters, also of the dark blue of the trade-wind regions, and especially of the Indian Ocean which poets have described as the "black waters."'

This is interesting, but what of the blue that we believe ourselves to see in *fresh* water? Remembering my own sensations of colour with regard to the waters of the Rhone and of Lake Leman I go to De Saussure for confirmation or the contrary, and the more willingly to him because he simply noted what he saw without any view either to literary or pictorial art. In his first volume (par. 8) he says that the Rhone issues brilliant and pure from the lake where it has left its deposit and comes with its waters *limpides et azurées* to pass through the town of Geneva. In the fifteenth paragraph he speaks of *ses eaux bleues et pures*, and in the thirty-fifth chapter he recurs to the subject when at Tarascon, and observes there the striking contrast between the yellow and troubled waters of the Provençal Rhone and the sapphire 'dont elles ont la couleur en sortant de notre lac.' I find that Dr. Macculloch refers to the colour of the Rhone at Geneva in connexion with that of the streams in Arran. The Rhone colour he calls blue, and mentions it as a 'remarkable instance,' an 'exception,' and he says, 'it remains to be explained why there are such exceptions as that of the Rhone, why any water is blue, or why it should possess two distinct colours in different situations; these, it is scarcely necessary to say, being quite independent of reflection from the sky.' Mr. Ruskin wrote a description of it at Geneva from nature, and noted its 'general hue of aquamarine green,' the reflection of a boat being cast in a transparent pea-green, 'considerably darker than the pale aquamarine of the surface at the spot.' He says also that 'the surrounding water takes a lightish blue reflection from the sky.'*

The difficulty in these cases (as in Professor Colvin's 'sapphire wine' of the Saronic Gulf) is to be quite sure how much of the sapphire has dropped down from heaven and how much is real local colour. I believe that the Rhone water in the Lake of Geneva is green, but of a green so naturally inclining to blue that blue reflections of various degrees make it pass from aquamarine to azure with great facility, and in this way we get a delightful variety of most harmonious transitions, the local colour of the water not being hostile to the reflec-

* Mr. Ruskin is a better witness than Byron, on account of his studies in painting. Byron says in a note to the verse—

'*By the blue rushing of the arrowy Rhone.*'

'The colour of the Rhone at Geneva is blue, to a depth of tint which I have never seen equalled in water, salt or fresh, except in the Mediterranean and Archipelago.'—*Childe Harold*, Canto iii., 61.

tions but friendly to them, and ready to welcome them, and play with them in the pleasantest way.*

Dr. Macculloch's account of the deeper pools in the streams of Arran is that 'with a depth of ten or twelve feet the colour is a strong sea-green, and it is sensible even with two or three. It resembles the colour of the sea most exactly, and is quite equal to it in intensity.'

The strongest green (considering the depth) that I remember to have observed in fresh water was in the Gardon which flows under the Roman aqueduct called the *Pont du Gard.* I have seen many green rivers and lakes, but if memory serves me well their greens were often dissimilar. It may be affirmed that the natural colour of fresh water is green, but so long as the quality and shade of it cannot be determined, so long as there are differences so marked as that between the Saône and the Rhone, it is difficult to affirm positively what the natural colour of fresh water may be. All that can be said is that it is green of some kind, the causes of the observed differences being as yet unknown to us. We have seen that blueness in sea water is accounted for by the presence of more salt.†

The effect of diversity of local colour upon the character of lakes is of the utmost importance. It is difficult for peat-stained waters to have that brightness and gaiety that belong to a Swiss lake; but, on the other hand, what they lose in gaiety they gain in solemnity, and I know of nothing in green water, even under the darkest skies, that can be compared with the gloom of a peat loch when Nature has put on mourning. It is so dark, so depressing, so completely and unutterably dismal, that it seems as if it belonged to the dreariest regions of Erebus. It is impossible on the shores of those black waters, in which the bottom immediately becomes invisible, to believe that in the same world the limpid pale-green wavelets are glittering on other lakes whose white pebbles and silvery fishes gleam far down in their transparent bays.

* With regard to the local colour of the Rhone the following note may be of some value. I observed lately with great care the colour of the Saône from Mâcon to Lyons under very favourable circumstances, as the river was more than usually clear. The colour was a fine rich green not inclining to blue except in reflections. With this hue quite fresh in my memory I went to see the colour of the Rhone at the bridge of La Guillotière, and found its water of quite a different green, with a far greater predominance of blue, and much resembling an etching-bath moderately charged with copper when a plate has been bitten.

† I remember an oil-shale mine in France, a long deep cutting below the level of the surrounding country, and it got flooded suddenly by heavy rains, so that the pumps and galleries were overwhelmed. After the water had cleared itself of sediment it became a rich emerald green. That was the purest rain water.

Peat water, on the contrary, is often beautiful in rock basins, like those of some Highland stream from four to ten feet deep, when the pebbles show through it in a rich variety of brown, especially in bright sunshine. If green waters have been compared to emerald, and blue to sapphire, these pools have naturally suggested the cairngorm stone. They have often engaged the attention of modern painters, who are tempted by the beautiful asphaltum-like tones, the difficult and interesting problem being to give the play of the brown transparence with the reflections from sky and vegetation.

It is time now to consider the effects of wind upon lake surfaces. They differ from that of the sea in being much more protected from the wind, and in receiving it often in a very peculiar manner, dependent upon the forms of the land. This, no doubt, is equally true of salt water that happens to be near mountainous shores, and especially of those marine inlets which, like the Scottish sea-lochs and the Norwegian fiords, are enclosed by hills almost as completely as any fresh-water lakes. Nevertheless, when we compare lake surfaces with sea surfaces it is understood that the open sea is meant, and also that the lakes are of moderate dimensions so as not to resemble seas.

The reader has often found the substantive 'lake' associated with the adjective 'calm.' Authors compare the sea when tranquil to a mountain-lake, and no doubt the comparison is the best that can be made when the lake does happen to be calm, as it has no rippling shallows or swirling whirlpools like a river, but sleeps all of it together when it does sleep, with a wonderfully perfect somnolence.

The assertion has been made that a lake is never absolutely calm, that there is always a delicate stir somewhere upon its surface. I have seen all the surface of a lake that came within my range of vision absolutely calm occasionally, but this is rare. What we call a calm morning is a time when the surface is very delicately breathed upon by the lightest airs, first in one place and then in another, the slight effacement of reflection being very rapidly repaired.

In perfect calm everything is reflected under certain conditions determined by the state of the light and by the local colour of the water. This condition of things is seldom given in art, because we like to see that the water-picture is not a mere echo of the reality, but something with a character of its own, and also because the accurate painting of perfect reflection would be just as laborious as that of the things reflected, nay, even more laborious, as it would have to be a close copy with difficult calculated changes. Amongst Mr. Haden's

etchings there is one of the village of Kidwelly, South Wales, which gives almost perfect calm. Here and there a painter has tried it as an experiment or a *tour de force.** The degree of calm that Turner allowed himself was not absolute, but that in which the reflections are elongated, and they are not so at all in absolute calm. Turner required surface on water, which is quite lost when the reflections are perfect, and besides that he worked too rapidly to draw perfect reflections.'

A Highland lake reflecting accurately the minutest details down to the separate leaf-needles of the Scotch fir and the curled petals of the honeysuckle, and the map of each blotch of grey or golden lichen on the granite rocks of an island, shows in its stirless bosom a world turned so completely upside down that it is hardly possible to look at it from a resting-boat without a feeling of giddiness. The scene is even more wonderful at night, when all the stars are in their places in the profound abyss, and it seems to you that your boat is hanging in empty space between the northern and the southern constellations. All that hinders the illusion is the circle of hills, but at night they seem low, remote, and insignificant.

The most wonderful sight I remember as an effect of calm was the inversion of the comet, called Donati's comet, in the year 1858, during the nights when it was sufficiently near the horizon to approach the rugged outline of Craiganunie and be reflected beneath it in Loch Awe. In the sky was an enormous *aigrette* of diamond fire, and in the water a second *aigrette*, scarcely less splendid, with its brilliant point directed upwards and its broad, shadowy extremity ending indefinitely in the deep. To be out on the lake alone, in a tiny boat, and let it rest motionless on the glassy water, with that incomparable spectacle before one, was an experience to be remembered through a life-time. I have seen many a glorious sight since that now distant year, but nothing to equal it in the association of solemnity with splendour.

Perfect calm on lakes is often associated with mist, and then it may happen that the water is entirely hidden by the mist. If you are upon it the shores are hidden, which gives an idea of vastness not without sublimity. Any fresh-water lake of moderate dimensions and without currents may be navigated in a small boat safely and certainly in the densest fog with the aid of a compass, a patent log, and an ordnance

* In a book written by Baron Hubner (the well-known diplomatist), giving an account of his travels round the world, there is a large woodcut representing the 'Mirror Lake and the Three Brothers.' The Brothers are rocky eminences on a precipitous shore, and to justify the name of the lake it is made to reflect quite perfectly. I need not say that every lake or pond does exactly the same when there is absolutely no wind.

map, but you can do nothing without them.* With these aids one has a fine sense of the vastness of the unseen sheet of water, especially at night. I do not know of any case in which landscape produces such an effect on the mind without being seen. The lake seems infinite and mysterious, sometimes terribly so, as in an adventure that happened once on the lake of Neuchâtel, when it was entirely frozen in the fearful winter of 1879. A young man living in the town of Neuchâtel went out skating in the evening, when a mist came on, covering the whole lake, which has a surface of about a hundred square miles. He had no compass, and skated vainly about in circles all night long, endeavouring to find, first Neuchâtel, then simply land anywhere, but without success. It was a situation to try the strongest nerves. The cold was so fearful that to stop and rest meant certain death, and the search for land so fruitless that it seemed as if the lake was without a shore, and the skater was toiling uselessly on a planet of polished ice enveloped in an atmosphere of cloud.†

The first effect of a slight disturbance in calm water is to elongate all vertical reflections. An amount of disturbance sufficient to effect this may be a slight tremulousness in a lake surface not amounting to any perceptible breeze. The elongation of reflections may take place very unequally over an extended area of water.

The curious phenomenon of columnar reflections belongs to this state of the surface. The peculiarity is, that although the things reflected may have very irregular sides, they are all reflected as if they had straight and vertical sides, whilst the reflection is very much prolonged. The water seems to take no note of irregularities. A cloud with the most irregularly rounded and broken outline will be reflected almost as if it were a square white sheet; a bright opening in an evening sky, definitely outlined and ending in a narrow point of light, will cast a broad band upon the water.

I now approach some phenomena of reflection which, although more complex, are still very common on all sheets of water of any considerable extent; but before writing about them I desire to say a few words about that remarkable faculty by which we are able to pass without notice what is before our eyes.

The *power of not seeing* is developed to a surprising degree in the

* This, of course, is written from personal experience. I did what I liked on Loch Awe in night-fogs. Not having an ordnance map in those days I had made a chart for myself on a large scale.

† The young man did land on the opposite shore ultimately after skating the whole night. He was tired almost to exhaustion, but being of a vigorous constitution soon recovered.

inhabitants of great capitals, and a most desirable and even necessary power it is, for it spares them much cerebral fatigue. You go to London or Paris from the country, observe everything, and are wearied; but a constant resident sees only what he wishes to see, and spares his eyes and brain. A friend who has good taste in buildings tells me that he is able not to see the ugly houses in London. In the manufacturing districts the permanent residents are able not to see the dirt that offends a stranger.

After these examples,* the reader is prepared to hear that, with the exception of a very few studious observers, people do not see the phenomena of water. I remember the intense feeling of discouragement with which I first became clearly aware of this. A few more or less distinguished artists had visited me at Loch Awe, and found me studying these phenomena and trying hard to paint them. They said, 'It is of no use, because however well you paint them nobody but a painter will understand them.' This was said even of the simplest and commonest appearances, such as the interruption of a reflection by a well-defined breeze. As for the rarer and more beautiful phenomena, some of which I now intend to describe, I was earnestly cautioned to avoid them and stick to the most commonplace appearances that could be found. Hard advice to follow in a land of enchantment like the West Highlands where Nature herself is in perpetual rebellion against the commonplace! If I venture to write about them here, it is because the pen is a good combative instrument, a real weapon, which the brush is not. If, instead of writing on geology, Lyell had painted the earth with unacceptable veracity, he would have been laughed at and relegated to obscurity.

You have first the perfectly polished calm surface that reflects brilliantly without elongation. Then you have this surface just dulled by a breathing of air so delicate that it can scarcely be recognised as a breeze even of the lightest. Now this dulled surface will not reflect an object as to its form, but it will take a tint by reflection, generally from the sky, and it will come across the perfectly smooth water with a hard edge exactly like local ice, and that edge will often take bright colour from some portion of the sky which is not disseminated over the rest of the dulled surface. I have before me a memorandum from nature of an evening effect in which the dulled surface has a sharp edge against

* Much more striking examples might easily be found. I have met with able and intelligent Frenchmen who stoutly affirmed that capital letters were *never* accented in their language. I referred them to the books in their own libraries, when, to their astonishment, they perceived the accents for the first time. The explanation is, that it is not the custom to accent capital letters in manuscript.

the reflecting part of the water; and though it is generally of a pale ashen grey, the edge of it is bordered by a thin line of yellow from a yellow opening in the sky. Those parts of the reflected image which are severed from the rest by the space of dulled water are just what they would be if all were connected by the parts now hidden and obliterated.

Now it frequently happens that the whole of a lake surface is dulled except a small space, which for some inexplicable reason the light air fails to touch, and then, of course, we have the curious phenomenon of an isolated calm. If the reader will imagine a sheet of looking-glass inserted in an immense floor of aluminium he will have in his mind an image of the natural thing as near to the truth as it can well be made in terms of artificial things. The aluminium is rather too equal in tint to represent the dulled water, and the mirror too regular in outline for the isolated calm. In nature these isolated calms take an immense variety of shapes, so that after studying very many of them I arrived at the conclusion that almost any shape was possible for them except a mathematically regular shape, such as a square, a lozenge, or a circle. They were often elongated by perspective, and often presented the most curiously fanciful outlines with little bays and inlets of their own, as if they had been miniature lakes. Sometimes they were merely round basins of dark water appearing in the distance like very well-defined spots. I need scarcely say that isolated calms, if repeated in art, are a great cause of offence to the unobservant, as it is not by any means easy to account for them in nature itself. Of course the truth must be that the light air which dulls the rest of the surface does not touch those calms, but why does it respect those particular places, and for so long together? It must rise over them and leave a little dome of perfectly still air immediately above them.

An isolated calm which, from its position, happens to reflect some portion of a dark mountain, will itself be apparently much darker than what it reflects, for two reasons. First, the reflection is usually darker than the thing reflected, but in this case the darkness is still farther increased by the powerful contrast with the dulled surface, usually much lighter. If the reflection occurs in peat water the three causes combined will sometimes make an isolated calm look perfectly black, as if it were a pool of ink in the middle of the lake, with edges as sharply defined as the dark blue of the Gulf Stream.

Isolated calms often take the form of what in a garden we should call walks or alleys. They look like tranquil canals in the midst of

more or less disturbed water. You may choose such a canal and row along it intentionally when the water at oar's length to right and left is all dulled or positively rippled. The edges of the canal will be as sharp as if there were land on each side of it.

The extreme capriciousness of breezes makes it most difficult to give any fixed laws about their outlines, but in course of time we become sufficiently familiar with their character to have a sense of what sort of outline is natural, and then we are likely to draw something that will appear strange, eccentric, and unaccountable.

A lake surface is a vast sheet on which the breezes register their presence as soon as they come into existence, but of all records this is the least permanent, for the water is no sooner left to itself than it recovers its own perfection, and the dead breezes leave no history. After long familiarity one comes to think of them as separate aërial, almost spiritual, existences coming down from the sky, where they are invisible, to make their presence visible on the lake. The water surface teaches us new and strange truths about these aërial beings; first, that they disport themselves in companies, often going in the most various directions, next, that they dive down from above, skim along the water for a little distance, and rise up again suddenly, like swallows. Sometimes I have imagined them like great gyrating wheels of air, that touch the water only with a part of their circumference, but no comparison answers exactly to their strange nature. They often touch the water quite delicately at first, then ruffle it into a ripple, and leave it suddenly and abruptly, the succeeding current of air doing exactly the same thing in the same place for rather a considerable time, and making a sort of drawing upon the water of a very definite character. The wonder is not that a gust should strike the water, but that a light breath of air should be succeeded by a steady current just in its own direction, long enough to give a decided shape to the markings.

There is every gradation in the strength of wind, from the breath that simply dulls the surface to the hurricane that carries off the crests of its waves in a cloud of flying spray, but it is the faint breezes which offer the greatest variety of appearance. Different degrees of strength in these light airs produce quite different colours with the same surroundings, which, I believe, is due to the different angles and slopes of the minute waves, causing them to reflect different parts of the sky or shore, but this part of the subject is as yet, scientifically speaking, obscure. If I had to account for everything I see I should be particularly embarrassed by the very faintest airs of all, which produce a dulness not

amounting to ripple, and are then frequently crossed by ripples of various degrees of strength and differences of colour. It seems as if a zephyr were itself traversed and inter-penetrated by a somewhat stronger breeze, as in architecture a moulding is sometimes supposed to force its way through others. Imagine a crowd moving slowly in one direction, and a small body of men traversing the crowd in another, you have a rude image of the inter-penetration of breezes. In nature it occurs in the most complicated, the most various, the most unexpected ways.

Sudden squalls are nothing but these local airs endowed with greater force. It is well known that on mountain lakes they often occur with dangerous violence.* I have had the most ample experience of them and know their ways as well as most fresh-water sailors, which has not prevented me from getting caught occasionally, even as the inexperienced. Mr. Dixon Kemp says of Windermere, 'Very heavy squalls are frequent, and they come down from the mountains without warning and with great fury.' This is well known to be the great danger of lake sailing in all mountainous countries. I have twice seen every scrap of sailing gear cleared away by a squall as if with a hatchet, and should probably not have been writing this page if the boat had not been a life-boat. You have a sheet of smooth water between you and the foot of the mountain whence the squall is to come. There is not the slightest apparent reason to anticipate danger when, with a suddenness like the swoop of a falcon, and an *invisible* falcon, a gust comes straight down from the hills and slaps the water just where you happen to be. The lake has not time to rise in great waves, but it is made rough for the moment, and there is more of the reality than the appearance of peril. A mile off it looks nothing but a touch of wind—in the middle of it the boat-sailor has need of all his nerve.

When a steady wind is blowing from the land, but the land is high, the result for those on shore is an appearance of tranquillity that is dangerously deceptive, for they do not realise the size of the distant

* And not only on lakes but on all narrow seas hemmed in by mountains, to the constant anxiety of sailors when they get into such places. The following description, by Sir Samuel Baker, of Lord Dufferin as a boat-sailor (*Nineteenth Century*, July, 1884), refers to the squalls of the Bosphorus:—

'His tiny craft is well known upon the Bosphorus, in which, without the help of any individual, he trusts himself in boisterous weather to the dangerous waters of the Straits; it is his delight to challenge the rough eddies, and, unaided, to wrestle with the blasts that suddenly burst from the mountains and keep the sailor ever on the alert. That is his own boat, and he is skilled in the management of the helm and sails; he can ease off the sheet to a fair breeze, or bring her sharp up to a coming squall, or let all fly in case of absolute necessity; but should a solitary and inexperienced stranger be the unfortunate occupant of this handy cockle-shell, "Found drowned" would be the verdict upon his body.'

waves, taking them for a mere ripple, and feeling a great sense of security on account of the smooth water that lies near them. This seems like an allegory of safely sheltered youth looking out in the disdainful confidence on the perilous sea of manhood.

A steady breeze blowing over the whole surface of a lake, up it or down, is less favourable than any other condition of wind and water to the production of picturesque effects. The beautiful varieties of island, promontory, and mountain, are no longer reflected, and instead of them we have a monotonous expanse of waves. Such an expanse is particularly monotonous when the sky is either entirely clear or entirely clouded. It is more varied by the accidents of sun and shower, as the sunshine may glisten on the waves in streaks or paths of splendour, and a shower may divide the surface by making one part of it appear much paler than the rest.

There are effects of monotony that painters are careful to avoid on account of the narrow criticism which condemns everything in their art that does not pamper the sensual appetites of the eye, but these are not forbidden in literature, so I may describe an effect which I have often seen, and which seems to me the dreariest that Nature ever produces.

Imagine a vast lake basin surrounded by wintry hills, with the snow on all their summits and far down in all their ravines, the visible land all purple-grey and russet down to the water's edge. The sky is one vault of gloomy cloud fissured with grey waves and bars, but not showing one glimpse of blue. The whole of the lake is in small waves, thousands and thousands of them rising and falling with the most perfect sameness, to break at last with a melancholy repetition on a bleak and stony shore. Not one reflection varies the vast expanse, there is not a sign of life upon it anywhere; no boat crosses it, no bird swims upon it; only now and then a seagull flies over it with a desolate cry, and the lake grows darker and darker, from a dull lead-colour to mere deadness of gloom without a tint, till land and water lose themselves together in blackness of starless night. And even then the unseen waves come moaning to the invisible beach.

There is nothing, that I know, quite so dreary as that; and if you go down into the causes of it you will find that the waves do much to produce the dreariness, by the monotony of their multitudes, by their destruction of reflection, and by the increased feeling of wearisome extent of surface which they communicate to the mind.

In storms the effect of them is very different. They do not pro-

duce melancholy then, but strong excitement, arousing us to energy in sympathy with their own. A lake-storm, however, is not one of the best examples of the art of nature, since instead of producing an appalling effect with small means, it produces an effect inferior to the reality of the danger. In the ocean the waves may be very grand without being very dangerous, but a lake-tempest may be terrible when the waves are small and short. The wind is equally strong on both, and more capricious on enclosed waters. I have been out with my boat in lake-storms of great violence, but always found the danger to be rather from the wind than the water. The waves are very steep-sided, and break soon, and the tops of them are readily carried off in spray; still, you may drive a decked boat through them if you are not afraid of a wetting, but the wind is irreconcilable, and one is often fain to get into the lee of an island and wait for some diminution of its fury. There one enjoys rest and safety as in 'the whirlwind's heart of peace,' whilst the storm tears through the branches above us and the boat heaves on the swell, which is all that comes to us of the wild tumult of the waters.

CHAPTER XXV.

Lake Scenery in Painting.

THE word 'scenery' is very well applied to landscape in lake districts. It is, indeed, strictly 'scenery,' and therefore, perhaps, not quite so well adapted as less scenic material to the purposes of the landscape-painter. There is a very general conviction amongst artists that lake districts are perilous regions for their art; and although several distinguished literary men have delighted in them, and lived amongst them, you seldom find a famous landscape-painter who has devoted himself to the illustration of their beauty.

One of my friends, who had never before visited the English Lake District, wrote to me from there and expressed his belief that the objection to scenery of that kind, which is so common amongst painters, was nothing but a fashion. It seemed to him so beautiful in nature as to be necessarily good material for art. For many years I had the same belief, having a passionate delight in lakes, indeed it still seems to me that a really beautiful lake, not too big, and with mountains, bays, promontories, and islands, is, in its variety and unity, the masterpiece of natural arrangement in landscape.

Still, it can hardly be the effect of a mere fashion that keeps distinguished landscape-painters so much away from lakes. In the public art galleries of Europe, amongst the works of the old masters, are there any pictures of lake scenery? In the National Gallery we have the little picture by Cuyp, representing a ruined castle on an island in a lake, and that, so far as I now remember, is the only decided piece of lake scenery, by an old master, that we possess. I have no recollection of any real lake scenery in the Louvre; there may be a few ponds in dull and commonplace country, but there is nothing to recall the beauty of Como or the sublimity of Lucerne. Far from having any passionate love and admiration for the beautiful or magnificent lakes of Europe, the old masters, if we may judge by their pictures and drawings, appear to have regarded them with absolute indifference, as material unsuited to their art. There is a change, no doubt, in modern times. The increased interest in nature generally, the advent of geological science, the modern habit of travelling for pleasure, the practice of sketching in water-colour,

have led to a general investigation of landscape nature, from which lake districts have not been omitted, and in Great Britain a special attention has been directed to Loch Katrine by Sir Walter Scott, and to Windermere and its neighbourhood by Wordsworth. There has even arisen a certain steady manufacture of lake scenes for the picture market, but if the reader takes the trouble to think over a list of the most famous modern landscape-painters, he will be surprised to find what an exceedingly small proportion of their energy has been devoted to lake scenery. It is true that Turner had an affection for Lucerne, and made many sketches there, but lake scenery occupies a very small place in the immensity of his production. In the Turner Gallery we find one Italian lake, but in a completely ideal picture (the 'Golden Bough'); of English lakes we have a small and very early picture, 'Buttermere with part of Cromack Water,' and this exhausts the list, except that there is another early little picture connected with the Lake Avernus by its subject. Of the Swiss lakes we have not one, of Scottish lochs not one, of Como, Garda, Maggiore, Lugano, not a hint. Anything rather than lakes! A Sand-bank with Gipsies, a view of Clapham Common, the Field of Waterloo, Hannibal Crossing the Alps, the Deluge, the Tenth Plague of Egypt—anything rather than lakes! In the collection of studies and drawings there is just enough lake scenery to show that Turner did not exclude it from his conception of the Universe.

There is always a reason for the preferences of an artist, and in this case the reason is precisely because Turner was so much of an artist that he did not get carried away by the passion for natural landscape. There is a striking difference between him and Wordsworth in this respect. Turner's affection for nature was of such a kind that he could easily live away from it, and he never sacrificed art to nature; Wordsworth loved nature so passionately that town life would have been hard for him, and he often injured his writing, artistically, by making his descriptions too long, or too minutely faithful. The hold that Nature had upon the two idiosyncrasies was of a very different character. She possessed Wordsworth, she supplied materials to Turner.

Since he always kept his artistic independence, and since he educated himself by the constant study of art, Turner was in no danger of falling into those traps that Nature appears to set for the unwary. He perceived the artistic dangers and difficulties of lake scenery.

Like Turner, Constable attempted this class of subject early in his career, but soon abandoned it for ever. Leslie says of him that in the year 1806 'he spent about two months among the English lakes and

mountains, where he made a great number of sketches, of a large size, on tinted paper, sometimes in black and white, but more often coloured. They abound in grand and solemn effects of light, shade, and colour, but from these studies he never painted any considerable picture, for his mind was formed for the enjoyment of a different class of landscape.'

I am not aware that Linnell ever painted lake scenery. Samuel Palmer went several times to Wales, but never, I believe, to the lakes of the north, and the catalogues of his works that accompany his biography do not contain the name of a single lake, though the artist had travelled in Italy. This is the more remarkable that he was by no means narrow in the choice of subjects for study, but would sketch hills, plains, rivers, cities, and the bays of the Mediterranean with much breadth of observation and openness of mind.

In recent times a young painter rose to fame in landscape before his premature death, but although Cecil Lawson had no doubt ability enough to grapple with the difficulties of lake scenery, he kept to an easier class of subjects.

Amongst Frenchmen I do not remember a single notable artist who has been a painter of lake scenery. Claude often introduced a quiet pond, as in the etching called '*La Danse au Bord de l'Eau*,' a small, artificial-looking sheet of water, or as in the composition entitled '*Egérie pleurant la Mort de Numa*;' but he generally took great care to have a foreground of earth, and to let the water occupy only a small space in the canvas, bringing masses of trees across it, or buildings, that it might be simply refreshing and not predominant. There is no evidence that he cared in the least for the manifestations of natural power in lake scenery. His ponds give simple reflections, and that is all; they show no special study of water surfaces.

Amongst modern Frenchmen Claude naturally suggests Corot, who had a real affinity with him. Corot dearly loved a small pond to be introduced in part of his picture, but, like his predecessor, he took care to keep the water very strictly subordinate. In some instances he went so far as to give a lacustrine title to a picture. A well-known work by him is called '*Le Lac*,' and it is interesting to see with how much art he has reduced the water-surface to be actually painted, whilst giving the idea of a considerable extent. We are near a little creek, to the right and left of which are banks with trees, and two cows stand in *silhouette* against the water. The horizon is low, and the opposite shore of the lake is not elevated, whilst it contains hardly any detail. In Corot's mural painting of the '*Lac de Némi*' the same plan is carried still farther.

We have the little creek in the foreground, but this time it is bordered by steep rocky sides with trees, and between these we catch a glimpse across the lake, with just enough of the shore beyond to let us know that it is mountainous.* The sort of lake that really suited Corot was a pond like that at Ville d'Avray.

Daubigny's taste and experience alike led him to paint water in rivers. Theodore Rousseau, on the other hand, loved little marshy pools, and these were, I believe, the only lakes he cared about. There are several such in the Forest of Fontainebleau, where they serve to reflect a grey rock or a gnarled and ancient oak. Diaz appears to have had the same taste. A little pool in a wood was enough for him.

All these cases are those of men who really and truly loved landscape with the passionate landscape instinct. There may be differences of opinion about their success as artists, there can be none as to their love of nature.†

Outside of this class may be found very distinguished artists, men of great imaginative gifts, who are indifferent to lakes simply as a part of a general indifference to landscape. This seems to have been the case with Rossetti. His friend Mr. Caine tells us that he 'was no great lover of landscape beauty,' and that he was never at any moment sensible that the scenery about Thirlmere and the vale of St. John affected Rossetti when he stayed there; 'assuredly they never agitated him, and no effort did he make to turn them to account for the purposes of the romantic ballad he had spoken of as likely to grow amidst such surroundings.' Wordsworth's passion for the Lake district and Rossetti's indifference to it are due to idiosyncrasy and are not properly subjects for praise or blame. I have more than one friend of great culture and ability, and of delicate feeling too, who cares little for landscape, and has no special interest in lakes.

Amongst painters heartily devoted to landscape the objections to lake scenery may, I believe, always be traced ultimately to this, that it is not easy to deal with, is not readily made pictorially available. For this there are two reasons. The material presented by lakes is of a very difficult kind. We have seen how careful such artists as Claude and Corot have been to avoid large water-surfaces in their pictures, but a great lake

* In this composition the water-surface occupies one fourteenth of the painted area.

† One of the most distinguished living French landscape-painters, Hanoteau, loves nature quite as much as Constable did, and studies out-of-doors as much as any landscape-painter, but he has never painted a lake. There is a pond near his country house, and he has often painted that.

cannot be dealt with like a pond or a puddle. A large water surface is always a difficult thing to paint, and generally unsatisfactory when painted. The distances in the grander lake scenery are always composed of mountains, and these, again, are very difficult and very unrewarding, as great labour and great knowledge may result in what the public feel to be a piece of dry study, interesting only to geologists. The discouragement produced by these difficulties is increased by the consciousness that a landscape-painter can win little credit by overcoming them as all landscape-painting is reputed, like the Italian language, to be a delightfully easy accomplishment.

Painters find lake scenery not only difficult to copy but awkward to compose. You may stand on one shore of a long lake and see the mountains opposite, in which case you have four bands across your picture, the beach, the broad water, the distant range of mountains, and the sky, exactly as in Mr. Hunt's study of the Dead Sea in the 'Scape-goat'—a study full of the rarest truth but not a composition. Or again, you may give one of those lake views which succeed each other endlessly as you go up or down a lake. Thousands of such views are composed of an advancing piece of land on one side and another of less importance nearly opposite as side scenes or *repoussoirs*. Between the two, you see a distant mountain, and there is perhaps an island or a promontory in the middle distance. In nature we never tire of this arrangement, because the forms are infinitely varied and the things are beautiful in themselves. It is, in fact, like the arrangement of a theatrical stage before the actors come on. The side scenes represent the masses of land on each side (usually surmounted with trees) and the end scene fills the same office as the mountain and the sky. The bare boards of the stage are like the level water. In theatrical entertainments the actors attract so much attention, even when they are few, even when two of them hold a conversation or one pronounces a monologue, that the tiresomeness of the boards is not felt by the spectators, and in a natural lake the beauty of the water, and especially its marvellous changefulness, prevent us from thinking that there is too much of it, but in art we very soon have too much of it. In marine subjects shipping is employed to give composition to aquatic scenes; unfortunately there is very little shipping on lakes of moderate dimension: and if there were, the strong character of the precipitous shores would make it difficult to compose them well with masts and sails, so as to get a satisfying unity. The sailing vessels on the flat-shored Dutch lakes and on the Norfolk Broads may be happily compared with shore objects of scarcely more importance than themselves.

I should say, then, that the chief reasons why lake scenery is usually avoided by eminent painters are because there is a certain sameness in the natural composition, and because a large sheet of water is in itself less interesting in art than in nature, and also because there is a peculiar difficulty in arranging the material artistically; it does not seem sufficiently loose and movable, if I may say so, or sufficiently plastic, to be arranged with the freedom which landscape-painters like, and which they use without hesitation in dealing with trees, cottages, cattle, rustic figures, and shipping. In a word, lake scenery is found to be unmanageable.

This is one of those curious results of experience which force the conviction upon our minds that Nature and Art, though apparently so closely connected, are two different realms. Some artists acquire a way of estimating things so strictly professional that they come to despise what is not available for their own purposes in Nature. This seems a strange and an undesirable result of the professional habit of mind. Nature is grand and delightful in herself, and it matters little whether her noblest scenery can be made up into saleable canvases or not. Faithfully drawn it may look awkward, faithfully coloured it may look strange and perhaps outrageous; but let us ever remember that the glory of such scenery is completely independent of human imitative art. For unnumbered ages Loch Awe and Loch Lomond did without that 'little human praise' which comes in the shape of a sketcher's summer toil; and whilst the great artists of the Italian Renaissance were drawing and dissecting the human body, the 'green chestnut and grey olive' glassed themselves in the waters of Como, and the snows of the unheeded Alps dashed the dark-blue waves of Maggiore.

CHAPTER XXVI.

Rivulets.

A DROP of water runs down a pane of glass, but in what seems a capricious and irregular manner, as it keeps the form of a bag (in shape somewhat like a ripe fig) until it meets with a wet channel left by another drop that has descended before, then the bag seems to burst and the water slips down the way prepared for it with magical rapidity. Professor Clifford used to maintain that every drop actually had a small bag of its own; but without pretending to understand really how a drop is made, one cannot help wondering what becomes of the bags which always vanish at the same time with the water that they contained.

The force of gravitation that pulls down the drop of water on the window-pane is Nature's great sculptor of the earth; the water that she draws along (whether in liquid form as in a river, or in solid form as in a glacier) being one of her most powerful engines, at the same time excavator and remover of excavated materials, itself lifted up by solar heat, and never going down again to the ocean without performing some labour by the way.

On the window-pane nothing seems to be done by the water-drop except the removal of a little dust, for the glass is very hard and will be broken before Nature has had time to wear it away. In dealing with her own materials she is more at ease, and can take her own time. If they are soft materials the water makes its channel rapidly, if they are hard it takes longer, but even popular observation has noted the fact that water falling drop by drop will ultimately wear away a stone.

A few drops meeting together, and steadily replaced by others, are the beginning of a runnel, or tiniest of rivulets. It soon makes a way for itself in sand, and if the incline is steep it will carry millions of sand-grains downwards in its own body, and do a wonderful amount of excavating work in miniature. It is still, however, but a very small affair, where a minnow would be almost as ill at ease as a whale in a canal, and the only human industry connected with it so far is a child's toy water-mill that it turns with unflagging perseverance at the rate of a hundred revolutions a minute.

Great numbers of temporary runnels are made afresh during every

thunderstorm, and after a sudden, very abundant downpour, a broad, gravelled carriage-drive in a garden may present a complete river system in miniature with channels very like the broad and capricious stony channel of the Durance. One of the best opportunities for studying the action of small runnels is afforded by a smooth sandy beach when the sea retires, and a little rivulet, fed by some spring upon the shore, has to work its way to the ebbing salt-water across the intervening *tabula rasa*. It cuts for itself a fresh little path, undermines its tiny banks of sand, is turned aside by a pebble, as the Tagus is turned by the granite rock of Toledo, spreads itself in divided streamlets, as the Rhone makes many rivers about its islands, and finishes in a delta that will be demolished by the next tide.

If in hilly countries you take the trouble to trace a rivulet to its source (one of the most interesting of all pretexts for a walk) you generally arrive at an unsatisfactory sort of green boggy place, where the land is soaked by a spring, and you cannot get to any clear and definite fount, the only sure result being wet feet. The exact character of such places has been described with graphic accuracy by Mr. Archibald Geikie:—

'Beginning at the hill-tops we first meet with the spring or "well-eye," from which the river takes its rise. A patch of bright green mottling the brown heathy slope shows where the water comes to the surface, a treacherous covering of verdure often concealing a deep pool beneath. From this source the rivulet trickles along the grass and heath, which it soon cuts through, reaching the black, peaty layer below, and running in it for a short way as in a gutter. Excavating its channel in the peat, it comes down to the soil, often a stony earth bleached white by the peat. Deepening and widening the channel as it gathers force with the increasing slope, the water digs into the coating of drift or loose decomposed rock that covers the hill-side. In favourable localities a narrow, precipitous gully, twenty or thirty feet deep, may thus be scooped out in the course of a few years.'

Mr. Geikie notices the unintentional beginning of such gullies by human agency. Sheep-drains may be incautiously made on steep slopes. The drains, originally cut, perhaps, merely in the peat, have become the channels of torrents during a rainy season. They have thus been torn up and turned into long yawning chasms which every winter digs deeper into the side of the hill. The lovers of analogies have a fine opportunity here. Man begins a little work, believing that he is cutting a small drain, but Nature sends more water into it than he ever bargained for, and converts it into a 'yawning chasm.' So we begin small enterprises that are to be kept, as we fancy, under the strictest control, but forces outside of us enlarge them, and we are astonished, after a few years, by the large

RHAIADR CWM, near FESTINIOG

Water-colour Drawing by DAVID COX

Reproduced in Photogravure by *ALFRED DAWSON*

The original water-colour drawing is in the British Museum. Much of its effect is dependent on the colour, which, of course, we have been unable to reproduce. In monochrome it remains a faithful study of a mountain rivulet with a little attendant cloud of mist. Readers who know the hills of Scotland and Wales, or the North of England, will appreciate it; but studies of this kind are chiefly interesting to those who are familiar with nature.

unforeseen consequences of our apparently insignificant decisions. There is not a country in the world whose history is so rich in great unforeseen consequences as that of England.

Mountain rivulets are remarkable for the great differences in the volume of water that they deliver. Every one who has lived near a Highland mountain will remember the white lines of watercourses that appear quite suddenly on the slopes of it after a great black rain-cloud has discharged its contents on the crest. Nothing gives one a more impressive idea of the quantity of water that must be carried in such a cloud than the sudden activity and strength of the hundred rills that it sets in motion. Very many of these are mere rain-channels with no springs to feed them, but they have been gradually deepened by innumerable rain-storms in the past, so that the course the water must follow is settled for it beforehand. The filllng of these rain-channels by sudden storm has been effectually introduced by Tennyson in 'Lucretius':—

> 'Storm in the night! for thrice I heard the rain
> Rushing; and once the flash of a thunderbolt—
> Methought I never saw so fierce a fork—
> Struck out the streaming mountain-side and show'd
> A riotous confluence of watercourses
> Blanching and billowing in a hollow of it,
> Where all but yester-eve was dusty-dry.'

You have only to suppose this 'confluence of watercourses' to have the making of what Wordsworth called the 'loud streams,' the brooks that plunge in waterfalls audible at a distance.

When we ascend a mountain in dry weather it seems incredible that the trickling rills can ever have accomplished the work that geologists attribute to them, but this becomes more intelligible in times of flood. They are the sculptors of the ravines, first by undermining and causing falls of rock, and then by wearing and carrying it away in the form of sand, the sand again being a means of increased friction. The waterfalls, too, are continually receding, and so digging out ravines by a backward action. 'The process,' says Mr. Archibald Geikie, 'is indeed an infinitely slow one. During a short visit we of course cannot see any change actually accomplished, nor even if we were to return after the lapse of a generation might we be able to detect any appreciable difference. But each successive stage in the progress of the waste is illustrated before us; and the evidence is not less convincing than if we could follow the history of each block of stone from the time when, loosened by springs or frosts, it fell from the cliff into

the stream, down to the time when, after a long rubbing and grinding on the rocks of the watercourse, it is at last reduced to mere sand.'

Small rivulets appear to have attracted the attention of poets more than that of painters, as the scenery of them is on rather too petty a scale for landscape art, beyond studies of minute foreground detail, whereas poets are ready enough to mention them for their power to quench thirst, and also for their refreshing sound. They like to conduct them into gardens and to tell us how the miniature stream, always flowing limpid and cool in the very hottest weather, was caught and led in a channel of white marble to a marble basin and thence fell in a little cascade and glided away into the wood. Every one who has a garden knows the infinite value of a clear rivulet.

As rivulets make brooks and rivers by joining together, so by a converse process a stream may be divided into rills for purposes of cleanliness or irrigation. The effect of the tiniest artificial watercourse in a meadow, during a season that would be dry without it, strikes the eye of every one by the freshness of the green that springs everywhere from its overflowing and gladdens the heart of the farmer. In French towns where water is abundant and the streets not too level, it is often made to flow along them by the curbstones or in the middle of the pavement. Sometimes it is clear and sparkling as well as rapid, and then looks as if it were the mountain rill visiting the city for its pleasure, but sometimes it is foul with black refuse that it can hardly clear away, and at other times after a great downpour it rushes swollen and furious, a brown torrent laden with all manner of rubbish, down to the increasing river. Such is the rivulet tamed to the service of man, and there is this to be said in its favour, that the sacrifice of its beauty is the sign of its greater usefulness. Those who have seen it heartily at work, and sadly dirtied by its humble toil, may afterwards regret its absence in the foul streets of an Egyptian village, where day by day the stagnant pool is heated into more thorough corruption, and the body of the dead horse lies macerating, and the men and boys bathe together, and the fellah women fetch water for domestic use. The one merit and quality of a rivulet is to flow quickly and do its work merrily, whether it remains as clean as a prince's child or blackens itself like a little chimney-sweep.

The ancient Romans knew the value of a rivulet better than any other people; and if such streams had the consciousness that classic imagination attributed to them, they must have been proud to see what magnificent preparations were made to induce them to enter the Roman cities, what stately aqueducts were built with tier above tier of massive

arches to carry on the top of them a narrow channel, smoothly lined with cement, that the rivulet might glide easily above the valleys and plains, till it was received at last with infinite honour in the magnificence of sculptured fountains and baths. Even in our own day the same spirit has animated the ediles of Marseilles, who have brought a stream from the Durance and built for it the wonderful aqueduct of Roque-favour,* and led it proudly to their city where it falls at last in a beautiful garden between the advancing wings of the most elegant palace in the world.†

* Twice as high and twice as long as the famous Roman aqueduct at the Pont du Gard, and at least equally beautiful in design.

† The Palace of Longchamps where the collections are kept.

CHAPTER XXVII.

Brooks.

ENGLISH lexicographers do not appear to establish any distinction between *rivulet* and *brook*. They explain 'brook' by saying that it means a rivulet, and they explain 'rivulet' by saying that it means a brook. I am rather afraid, too, if we turn to the derivation of the word 'brook,' that we shall find the true original meaning of it to be a spring or fountain. Webster says that the root is the Anglo-Saxon word *bracan* or *brecan*, which is the English break, and 'signifies water breaking through the earth, spring, brook, as well as broken, swampy, and spongy ground, marsh.' And Webster goes on to say that a brook means a small natural stream of water or a current flowing from a spring or fountain less than a river. This, however, is just what I have been describing as a 'rivulet,' and I think it is a convenience to consider it a gradation of increasing size from rill and rivulet to brook and river. We are partly authorised to do so by the practice of the ancients who seem to have employed *rivus* for brook and *rivulus* (our rivulet) for a smaller brook, a distinction which may not always be very easy to establish, but which, in a general way, is intelligible. It is to be regretted that we have not more terms to distinguish streams of different importance. I should have been glad to find an English word for that kind of river which has deep and long pools of considerable width separated by rapids and shallows. It is not a brook, it is too big for that, but if you call it a river you class it with streams of more regular depth. Again, it seems to me that the French are happy in their distinction between *rivière* and *fleuve*. In its general sense *rivière* means any watercourse bigger than a *ruisseau*, but in its restricted sense it means a river that falls into a *fleuve*, and a *fleuve* is a great receiving river that falls into the sea.

My use of the word 'brook' will be at once understood by a reference to Tennyson's poem with that title. He described a lively running stream with pools and shallows, such as we are familiar with in all rather hilly countries, except where the aridity of the climate leaves the beds of small rivers habitually a desert of dry stones. It must be understood, however, that our 'lively running stream with pools and shallows'

is to be on rather a small scale (though bigger than a rivulet), because there are streams of considerable width answering exactly to this description which, nevertheless, we should not call brooks, simply on account of their size.

The essential characteristic of a brook is its liveliness. In some dull, flat countries there are small streams that move slowly and noiselessly through the meadows, and I suppose that they would be classed as brooks on account of their dimensions, but just as a sedate, serious, and formal boy, who walks in a solemn manner like an old hypocrite, is hardly a boy at all, except in mere age and size, having nothing of the vivacity of boyhood, so a brook that sneaks softly from farm to farm is destitute of the merry brookish characteristics. I never can help thinking of a brook otherwise than as a boy-river. It was all very well for the ancients to represent a big river like the Rhone as an old man with a long beard (though he must have been a very vigorous old man to walk as fast and unweariedly as the Rhone does), but their brooks ought to have been represented by boy-statues.

Perhaps it is a fellow-feeling that makes boys so fond of brooks. The writer of these pages had one or two intense affections of this kind in his youth, which seem to have lost very little of their intensity even now. His first love was a Lancashire stream that came from the moors and hollowed a ravine for itself in the sandstone, so that there was always a certain wildness in its surroundings, even when it passed through prim and fertile pastures. It is one of the great advantages of river-action that it does not simply carve a channel, but prepares the banks for the beauty that is to come. My brook was adorned richly enough with oak and alder, whilst abundant fern nestled in the crannies of the rocks, and creepers hung down before them. Constant changes produced by floods undermined the little cliffs and caused some of the nearest trees to fall across the stream. I remember a feeling I had about all those changes. I was intensely conservative about every scrap of natural beauty known to me, and could hardly forgive Nature herself for altering it in any way—not reflecting that her alterations had been going on from the beginning of time, and that the stream as I had first known it was itself nothing but one of their temporary consequences. Even the philosophy of mature age has a difficulty in reconciling itself to this terrible mutability of things. A brook alters greatly on most parts of its course in ten years, and in twenty years many portions of it become unrecognisable.

The wonderful little rhymed verses by Tennyson that are set like

jewels in the blank verse of 'The Brook,' contain all that is to be said about its modes of motion, and convey, as only such concentrated writing can, an almost simultaneous picture of the various incidents of its career. Mr. Ruskin generously says of that little poem that it is far beyond anything he ever did or could have done in beauty of description.* It may be said with exact truth that whilst Mr. Ruskin's descriptions are the essence of remembered observation this is the quintessence. I will not quote a word of it, for who would break a diamond into bits?

The life of the brook is an incessant alternation, rest and motion, silence and noise, darkness and sparkle and glitter. Like wayward geniuses it is alternately deep and shallow. Its gloomy pools have a deathful appearance, especially for people who cannot swim. There are places where it lies asleep under the trees for a considerable distance, then suddenly it awakens and begins to be noisy again like a child. In the course of its wanderings it may come to a rough country with rather a steep decline, and then it has no peace; it must go on hurry-skurry till it gets through all that region, and it makes a great to-do about it, gurgling in the hollows of the rocks and not going really half so fast as it appears to go with all that fuss and foam. In quieter and more level regions it lingers in many curves, and is always deepest under the bank that it cuts out, whilst it gets shallower on the other side, where it spreads the borrowed pebbles and sand. Wayward as it is, and wild, being in fact an aggressive bit of pure nature in the midst of artificial civilisation, it is still heartily welcomed by all who care for the beauty that it brings. It is welcomed even in lordly parks, where it flows under stately oaks, and the fallow-deer come to drink of it, and the well-protected trout lie fattening in its waters. It is welcome at the village, where the horses drink at the old ford that was used before the bridge was built. It is loved and studied in little bits by the solitary artist who stops at the village inn; it is followed for miles by the angler who knoweth every pool. The naturalist delights in it, because he can find a little world for his observation on its banks. He sees the kingfisher flash between branches and water with a burst of sapphire light. He has seen the grey heron watching patiently in the evening, or slowly lifting himself in the air with his great curved flapping wings. Here is one of those little experiences, of no importance in themselves, that are full of charm to a naturalist. In the late evening, before twilight passes into night, you can often see the reflec-

* See the autobiographical Epilogue to the cheaper and separate edition of the Second Volume of *Modern Painters*.

tion of a thing in water when the thing itself on the river-bank is completely lost in obscurity. The reason lies in the different parallax of objects in the reflection and on the land. In consequence of this the reflection of an object may be clearly detached against the sky, whilst the thing itself comes against the dark ground or bushes, and is so absolutely invisible that without the aid of the reflection you could never suspect its presence. It follows from this that a naturalist may sometimes detect the presence of an animal by means of the reflection that he would never suspect without it, just as Dutch ladies know when a visitor is at the door, and what sort of a visitor he is, by referring to a little mirror that hangs outside the window. In this way I once saw in a reflection the image of an otter. He was reconnoitring the banks of the brook very carefully, and thought himself invisible in the darkness, as indeed he was, but the water betrayed him. I then crept down so as to get my face nearly on the level of the water (to have a parallax like that of the reflection) and saw my otter in silhouette against the sky most distinctly, and a very fine otter he was. This little experience is nothing, and yet it would have interested a naturalist.

The devastation that can be caused by a brook in flood-time renders intelligible some of the great changes that geologists attribute to their instrumentality. We are too apt to think of the brook as the quiet agent that we see it in ordinary times, and to consider a flood as a rare accident, scarcely to be taken into account. But accidents that happen twice a-year, or twenty thousand times in a myriad years, are so frequent as to be almost incessant in the great past of geological history. If one flood does work that is visible enough to the eye of an agricultural labourer, what must be the changes effected by twenty thousand floods? Each of them produces greater changes than a year of quiet flowing. Here, for example, is an account of one such alteration. In a small river that is well known to me there is rather a long reach of apparently still water, varying in depth from two to twelve feet, and shaded by foliage, so as to make in summer a very pretty bower of greenery from end to end, with a smooth reflecting water-floor, just the place where Shelley would have liked to compose verses in a boat. At the end of this reach the stream takes a sudden turn to the left, at a right angle, and begins to be shallow and noisy again. Just at the angle there used to be a deep pit in the bed of the river that was a very good bathing-place, as one could plunge from the perpendicular bank. The field on the right of the long smooth reach is lower than that upon the left, and there was a certain place where a little creek

had been begun. It was entirely Nature's work, a little sandy inlet just big enough for a boat to take refuge in. That was the first hint of coming devastation, which might have been prevented if the landowner had put *fascines* at the entrance of the creek and filled it up with stones; but he was an absentee, and the farmer was too much occupied with his daily tasks to concern himself about the future. There came a great flood, which made use of the creek as the beginning of a new river bed. It dug a deep trench in the field, which looked as if it had been traced by an engineer to cut off the angle, and which rejoined the old channel lower down. When the flood subsided the new bed lay almost empty, a dreadful stony desert where excellent land had been, with a few little stagnant pools to mark the passage of the water. The bathing-place at the angle was filled up with stones, all the minor currents were altered, trees were uprooted and carried away. The whole place, in a word, had become scarcely recognisable.

The effects of former floods may generally be traced in the neighbourhood of brooks. Sometimes a string of stagnant pools will be found in the ancient bed of the stream, which it has now deserted for a more recent channel, but resumes occasionally in the great floods. In France these pools are called *noues*,* but I do not remember any special English word for them. They may still preserve the appearance of a river so completely that a picture of them would be certainly taken for a river scene, but in nature their stagnation is felt to be a melancholy sign of severance from the current they originally belonged to. They are like people who still exist, but who are cut off from all society, and live apart from the great current of human life which passes by them at a distance. Shady trees still grow by their borders, water-lilies float upon their dark surface, the iris does not disdain their tranquillity, which is disturbed only by rippling breezes or the touch of the water-ousel's wing. They may curve and wind exactly like the river of which in old times they formed a part, but their waters have no life, no progress, no hope of joining the mighty river or of reaching the distant sea. Only when the flood comes is the long-suspended river life resumed for a little while, but it is a fever of temporary excitement, and the waters flow thick, and turbid, and tumultuous, unlike the limpid stream of old in summers that will return no more.

* Derived by Littré from the Norman *noe*, a marshy field; and from the low-Latin *noa*, and *novium*. Littré says: 'The word appears to be the same as the old French *noue*, which means *nage*, and comes from *natare* by the intervention of a Latin form *notare*, to be found still in Italian.'

It might be affirmed that a brook in flood-time has changed its nature, and become something else than a brook. It is no longer the boy-river, sleeping in pools and chattering over shallows; it has become suddenly a giant, and a furious giant too, in a bed that is much too small for him. There is a brook that I know which is crossed by a bridge that seems of ample size, with massive stone piers and a roadway of great Swiss pine-trees. I remember a flood that demolished the piers and carried the wooden roadway bodily down the river, an event which in ordinary times seems beyond the limits of possibility. In all mountainous countries brooks are dangerous neighbours, as the floods in them occur so suddenly, being caused by some violent downpour on the heights above that is scarcely suspected in the valleys. Here is a brief account of one of these sudden floods by an eye-witness.* It occurred close to Loch Borlan, which had been sleeping in the morning in the serenest sunshine, and on the Sabbath, too, which only increased the impression of peacefulness and rest. Even so late as four o'clock in the afternoon the narrator 'strolled,' he says, 'as far as the Aultnacalgach Burn, in whose waters I was glad to cool my hands and feet, as I sat upon a stone in the middle of its bed, which was almost dry, save here and there where a few small puddles were supplied by what at this moment was a trickling rivulet, so small as to be almost noiseless. While the intense heat bespoke the presence of electricity, which must soon vent itself in a storm, not a cloud could I discern in any direction.'

Mr. Hicks walked back to his inn and began his dinner when there was a tremendous burst of rain, and a little burn or rivulet close to the house rose in flood instantaneously, so that in a few minutes there was a depth of three feet of water in a neighbouring cow-house, where a calf had to be rescued with difficulty. I may now proceed with the quotation:—

'The naval lieutenant and his brother, already mentioned, had proceeded along the flooded road to the bridge, wading knee-deep in the water, and were nearly "in at the death" of a more important animal than a calf, namely, the landlord's brother. Poor Sandy, who had already distinguished himself in rescuing a wheelbarrow and other less valuable articles from destruction, had waded on to the bridge over the burn where I had been sitting in the afternoon. He had not been many minutes contemplating the tremendous torrent before the impetuous burn broke up the arch, through which he immediately descended, and was whirled

* The quotation is from a modest little volume called *Wanderings by the Lochs and Streams of Assynt and the North Highlands of Scotland*, by J. Hicks. The author makes no pretension to science or fine sentiment, but he is a good observer.

along till he was close to the lake, when he fortunately saved himself by seizing the bank in stiller and deeper water.

'The force of the water in this burn was so strong as to bear him along upon its surface, without allowing him to sink, in which case he must have been killed by the huge stones which were coming down.

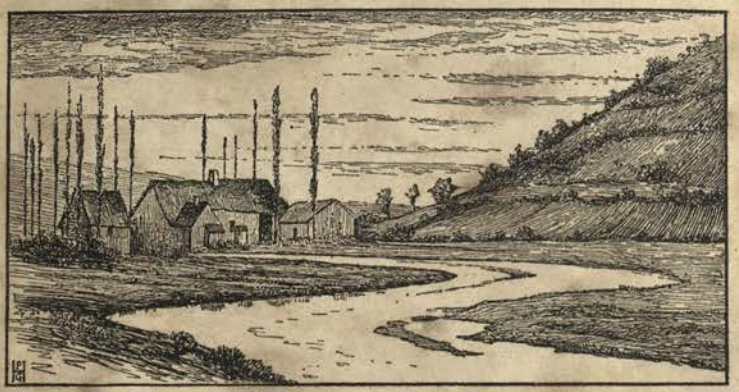
'Those only who are acquainted with mountain burns will believe me when I say that, while I beheld the descent of this water, I heard stones beneath knocking each other like sledge-hammers, and that on the following day we found heaps of stones piled up in cairns and mounds, composed of fragments of rock, of which many were five and six feet in circumference.'

In the neighbourhood of the same lake Mr. Hicks describes some caverns produced by the action of a mountain burn, and he warns the reader against the danger there is in trusting to the apparent peacefulness of such a stream in its quiet moods:—

'I have endeavoured to give a faint idea of this curious burn, whose water is as clear as crystal in its natural state, in which we beheld it so clear that a pebble could be plainly discerned at a depth of twelve or fifteen feet. If a heavy rain of an hour's duration were to fall upon the majestic mountain of Ben Mhor, in the immediate vicinity, this burn, now ankle-deep in its shallows, would descend in the torrent of a wall of water, rushing into the cavern which I visited, and whirling round and round, would sweep away all light inanimate objects, and would carry the ablest swimmer to destruction by whirling him impetuously against the pinnacles of a rock, or wheeling him round and round in an eddy, finally suck him down to an oblivion of this world and its associations.'

These are the most dangerous burns of all, because they are fed from mountains that have no forests to stop the sudden descent of the water. It slips down from the barren heights almost immediately into the gullies, and rushes furiously in its rocky channel to the lake.

In the beautiful story of *Undine* the brook that flows through the wood rises very suddenly also; but it may be fed from barren heights, and as we are there in the land of pure romance and poetry the brook is not subject only to natural rages, but being really Undine's uncle, Kühleborn, has purposes of its own to serve by wilful and apparently uncalled-for inundations. Do we not all remember how the knight and the fisherman heard the sudden rise of the torrent, and, springing to the door, beheld in the moonlight 'the brook that flowed from the forest tearing above its banks and bearing stones and trunks of trees along in its rapid course?' At the same time a violent wind raised the waves of the lake to foam, the trees of the peninsula bent from root to branch, and both the anguish-stricken men cried aloud, 'Undine! for God's sake, Undine!'



Farm-buildings near Voudenay l'Eglise on the Arroux. *A sketch from Nature (not arranged) showing how buildings may sometimes accidentally form a nexus just at the meeting of the lines in a natural composition.*

Cottages on a rocky shore near Laisy on the Arroux, *showing how a picturesque bit of natural shore may be crowned and completed by human work if it is not of a formal kind.*

CHAPTER XXVIII.

Canoe Rivers.

THE title of this chapter is not entirely satisfactory to me, as it seems to connect the subject more with pleasure navigation than with landscape; but there is no single term in our language to designate the particular kind of river that I mean, whilst the title adopted indicates it very exactly. The reader knows without further preamble that we are going to talk about rivers having much the same character as brooks, but of a larger size. Such rivers have pools of tranquil water, often of considerable depth, and which would be navigable for large boats if they could be connected together; but, unfortunately for the purposes of commerce, these pools are separated by shallows, and often by dangerous rapids. To make such rivers entirely navigable by barges it is necessary to 'canalise' them, which implies the removal of shallows by weirs, the institution of locks, and wherever rapids occur, the establishment of a lateral canal. So long as they remain in a state of nature these rivers are navigable only in canoes. They are equal to brooks in all the elements of beauty and variety, and greatly superior to them in sublimity, because a human being always measures the forces of nature by reference to his own small individuality, so that it is not the rage of a rapid, but the weight and power of the water delivered by it that impress his mind effectually. There is energy enough in the water of a street-gutter on a rainy day, but it only amuses children; a flooded river going at the same speed attracts the attention of the strongest men, and is a subject for poetry and painting.

One of the very first lessons we learn in canoeing on a wild and picturesque river is the strength of the impact with which it attacks the bank on the inside of every curve. We soon discover that the canoeist must learn the skill, and acquire the presence of mind, necessary to check the impetus given to his boat by the current and its invariable tendency, either to hurl him directly against the bank or to keep him so inconveniently near it that if there is any suddenly projecting point of rock he will scarcely be able to get clear of it. If he did nothing with the paddle his canoe would probably be scraped on the projecting pebbles and upset at the first obstacle. This gives a very vivid idea

of the energy with which the stream is always undermining its banks, how persistently and immediately it attacks them, and at what portion of the curve the energy employed is greatest.

Another lesson about water-action that the canoeist is sure to learn in a very short time is that there are different degrees of swiftness in the current of the same stream, that it runs most slowly on the shelving side, where the stones are spread out on beaches, and most rapidly at a point which is not exactly the middle, but nearer to the steep bank than the other. He also very soon finds out the meaning of a back-water or counter-current, where the stream goes frankly back again as if it had changed its mind, but not for very long. Besides these experiences he becomes acquainted with the real nature of a whirlpool, at least on a small scale, and it is an interesting thing to know intimately, though the danger of it is usually much exaggerated.

What is really dangerous in the experiences of canoe voyagers is the angular turn of a river, just at the end of a fierce rapid, when it dashes itself bodily against a wall of rock, in a tumult of confusion, not having had time to get round the corner quietly. There is a place of that kind on a river that is familiar to me, and I have often passed it in a canoe, always without accident, yet always with fresh wonder at my escape. The speed of the canoe has to be checked suddenly, just before it reaches the rock, and a new direction has to be given to it in the midst of the most agitated water. As it has shot down into the pool with the impetus given by a steep rapid, and as the pool is full of different eddies and currents, there is every preparation for an accident where swimming might not be of much use.* But the best account of one of these places (and on a larger scale) is to be found in Mr. Campbell's *Frost and Fire*. He is describing the descent of the river Muonio, that divides Swedish from Russian territory, and is, where Mr. Campbell struck it, about as broad as the Thames at Richmond, though still three hundred miles from the sea:—

'We had not much time to look about us. The river had gathered force and speed for the last six miles, and here it made a final leap. The river-bed made a bend below us and the whole body of water dashed with a roar like

* A mere upset is nothing if the water is either shallow enough to enable you to wade, or, if deep, then quiet enough for you to swim. I remember being upset twelve times in a single day on an unexplored river and feeling all the better for the exercise. The dinner in the evening, the talk with my companion who had been upset still more frequently, and the night's rest afterwards, had a charm only known to the adventurous. Yet our temporary resting-place was but a village inn, kept by the local blacksmith.

thunder right against a perpendicular rock some twenty or thirty feet high. There were bad stones on the shallow side; it seemed quite impracticable. Our pilot only grasped his paddle the tighter, and set his teeth, and off we went. It was grand, but somewhat terrible, to feel the frail boat whirl round as we entered the stream; but it was worse when we got fairly into it, and dashed at the wall of rock. We were covered with spray in an instant. No one spoke, and no one could have heard for the noise. On we rushed over the waves, nearer and nearer, faster and faster towards the bank—the high bow slapping hard into the waves; but skill and coolness were at the helm. An eddy seemed to throw us bodily off from the rock into the tail of the stream, and the steersman knew all about it. The old boat writhed and cracked from stem to stern and pitched headlong into the waves, till I thought she must part or founder. The man in the bow was nearly upset by a wave, which jumped on his back; and he nearly cut a crab; but the pilot was working his paddle with might and main, and we shot into a great boiling black pool safe, but well ducked. I know nothing grander than such a torrent, unless it be the rolling Atlantic, and nothing gives me such an idea of irresistible force as Atlantic waves after a storm.'

This is an excellent piece of description, full of the sense of reality, and conveying it to the reader. The expression, 'the high bow *slapping hard* into the waves,' is most graphic. All high bows with a flat front do so.*

The speed of a river in rapids is less than it appears. It would be impossible to row up them with oars on account of the stones, and paddling is too slow a process for headway to be made against a rapid stream; but I have often tested the speed of rivers by throwing light objects into them and following, and the consequence has always been a feeling of surprise that the water, apparently so swift, in reality went no faster than it did. A current appears to be very lively if it has the speed of a good walker, and if it goes like a very ordinary carriage-horse it looks terrific. The feeling of speed in descending a rapid is much increased by the necessity for rowing or paddling the boat itself as fast as possible, to keep steerage way, which adds our own speed to that of the water under us. Mr. Campbell took some note of time in descending the Muonio, but it is difficult to have exact distances, and there is always an involuntary tendency to exaggerate them. Part of his descent, that which included the rapid just described, he estimated at about seven miles, and this was accomplished in less than an hour, including stoppages to bale, which interfere inconveniently with the exactness of the calculation. But in the day's work of twelve hours,

* Even when it is inclined at a sharp angle. I know the owner of a sharpee (an American improvement on the old flat-bottomed French river boat), who was so much put out by the perpetual slapping of the waves upon the flat rising floor towards the stem that he had a cut-water added beneath it to stop the noise.

during which there were many rapids, the boat only accomplished fifty miles. One short rapid was got over in ten minutes. Mr. Campbell guessed its length at two miles, but it was not measured, and even this would not give the water the apparent speed on account of the deduction to be made for the efforts of the men, who were doing their very utmost during a 'spurt' of violent exertion. If the men were doing three miles an hour that would leave nine for the speed of this rapid; and if the men rowed only two miles an hour, on the average, during their twelve hours, we should still have to deduct twenty-four miles from the fifty, leaving twenty-six for the current, or the modest average speed of two miles and one sixth in the hour.*

There are only two satisfactory ways of ascertaining the speed of a river. If you ascend it in a steamer, the speed of which is perfectly known to you, it is easy to see how much you fall short of what the steamer does (at such a pressure) in stagnant water, and the difference is the current. The other way is to fix a patent log in mid-stream and see what it registers. With regard to the first I remember that a boat-captain on the Rhone told me he had sometimes descended that river between the Lac du Bourget and Lyons with a speed, during certain parts of the voyage, of thirty-six kilomètres an hour; but this must have been an unconscious exaggeration, due to the rapid passing of rocks and other objects, as the speed of his vessel did not exceed eighteen kilomètres, and therefore he would have been unable to ascend the current in those places on his return voyage up the river.† We may infer that the rapids of the Nile (usually called 'cataracts,' a word that gives a very false impression) exceed the rapidity of the Nile steamers, which have to be towed with ropes at the most difficult places; but we do not know exactly to what degree the speed of the current is in excess of that given by the engines. It is probable that when rapids are *massive*, like those on the Nile, that is, when a great body of water can make its way without interruption from rocks, the water towards the middle of the current may attain a far higher speed than it can in smaller rivers owing to the absence of friction in mid-current.‡

* I do not know how often the boatmen stopped to bale. The misfortune attending all attempts, except strictly scientific ones, to determine the speed of rivers, is that the data are never either perfectly exact or quite complete.

† It is just possible that the captain may have descended the Rhone on some particular occasion during a temporary flood, and postponed the ascent till after the flood had subsided.

‡ The following experiment, though it may seem of a trivial kind, will throw some light upon the subject. I happened to be in a town, where the streets are very steep, when a sudden shower of the greatest violence produced a flood in a few minutes. I

It would have been interesting if the officers in the Red River expedition had given us exact data of the speed attained by the great rapids on the Winnipeg River. Captain Huyshe described them very effectively in many pages that deserve to be quoted. Perhaps the following is the most appropriate here as it deals with the rapid itself rather than with the wonderful skill of the Indians who managed the canoe:—

'Many a dangerous rapid did we run in this way, but there was one that I shall never forget, the longest day I live; it scared us all, and was indeed enough to frighten the oldest voyageur. Coming on to it from above we could not see what we were rushing into, but followed the lead of the Colonel's canoe, and before we knew where we were, we were in the middle of it. Imagine an enormous volume of water hurled headlong down a steep incline of smooth, slippery rock against a cluster of massive boulders, over which it dashed madly with a roar like thunder, foaming along until it reached the level below, where its exhausted fury subsided into circling eddies, and deep treacherous whirlpools. Into this fearful abyss of waters we dashed, old Michel boldly steering straight down the centre of it; and as we tore down the incline at railroad speed with the green, white-tipped waves curling their monstrous heads high over the gunwale of the boat, we held our very breath for awe, and for a second or two forgot to row, till the sharp admonition of Michel aroused us from our stupor. By a great exertion of skill on the part of the two Indians the boat's head was turned sharply to the left, and caught the back-water of the eddy, in which we floated quietly and in safety, and gazed in utter bewilderment at the mighty rapid we had just run, with no worse accident than a good ducking. . . . It was the most dangerous rapid that we ran; the slightest touch on one of those huge boulders and the boat must have gone to pieces instantaneously, crushed like a cockle-shell, and the crew would have been beyond human aid, for the whirlpools and eddies at the foot of the rapid would have sucked down the strongest swimmer.'

Whatever may be the speed of a rapid there is always this to be said about it, that anybody who descends it in a boat is from first to last absolutely committed to his enterprise. Stop, he cannot: go on, he must; and now observe the curious peculiarity of his situation, which is

thought it a good opportunity for ascertaining the speed of water, and threw a piece of paper on the gutter in a steep street, where the current appeared to be rushing with great velocity. I followed it at a pace that I know exactly, which is four miles an hour, and this enabled me to keep up with the paper. But that street was far steeper than rapids usually are; indeed, I have only descended one rapid of that degree of steepness. The comparatively slow motion of the water in the gutter may probably be accounted for by the friction on the paving stones, which in so shallow a stream would retard the whole body of water. If the gutter had been made of smooth porcelain or glass its discharge would probably have been much more rapid. In a deeper stream the rapid water is contained in a channel of more slowly moving water.

that his one chance of safety consists in going faster than the swift waters that are hurrying him onward. I do not know a more perfect analogy than that which subsists between the descent of a rapid and the course of human life. The common old comparison of life to an ordinary river voyage is not nearly so accurate, since in travelling on a quiet stream you have liberty to stop when you like, to cast anchor, to lodge in some village on the shore; nay, you may even return against the stream, but who may 'remount the river of his years?' The descent of a rapid, on the other hand, *exactly* answers to the conditions of our existence. The boat is carried irresistibly onwards, there is no anchoring, no pausing, no possibility of returning against the stream. The travellers have but one chance of safety amidst innumerable perils, and that chance is to accept their situation and to work with all their might in harmony with the natural forces that are hurrying them onwards. To anticipate the future by being prepared for the most immediate of coming dangers, to waste no thought on those that we have escaped, to be prompt, and quick, and ready in the nick of time, these are the secrets of successful living as they are the wisdom of the Red Indian in the tumult of a Canadian river. Only one thing is wanting to make the analogy perfectly complete, and that may be supplied by an accident which exhibits the dignity of the Red Man at its best. It has sometimes happened that a canoe with its occupant has been carried over a great waterfall. I have read somewhere that this incident has occurred at Niagara, that a solitary Indian in his canoe was seen in the rapids just where the current began to be too swift for him to ascend it, and that after ascertaining the impossibility he paddled no more, but turned the prow of his little vessel down the stream, reclined with perfect dignity, and accepted his fate with resignation. Gently it floated on the smooth, quiet, swift, irresistible water, faster and faster, till fragile vessel and brave man went over the polished curve of the cataract, and were lost in the mist and the thunder.

A remarkable distinction between rapids and sea-waves is, that in the rapid we have the permanent wave that can be studied at leisure from the shore, the water of it being continually changed, the form remaining the same. These permanent waves are of two kinds, the round-topped wave that forms a dome of water over a sunken rock, and the leaping wave which has been stopped too suddenly to fold over in a quiet way, and so has to take a jump into the air, like some animal in a hurry. The round-topped wave often occasions very needless anxiety. The rock that causes it may be at such a depth as to offer

no hindrance whatever to any ordinary boat.* The leaping wave may be occasioned either by the striking of the water against an obstacle or by the collision of two currents from different directions. The first is dangerous in this, that the rock may possibly be near enough to the surface to do harm; the second is dangerous only because it may upset or swamp the boat, unless the speed of the current carries it straight *through* the mass of water, as happened to Mr. John Macgregor on the Reuss. The real size and strength of these permanent waves in rapids are only appreciated on the stream itself. Although everybody knows that objects diminish in apparent size by distance, few apply their knowledge to things that they are not familiar with close at hand. A man seen a hundred yards off is not taken for a dwarf; but a wave in the middle of a lake or river is easily taken for a ripple. It is only canoe travellers who really know the size and strength of the waves produced by rapids, or who have studied their peculiar nature. I therefore call in Mr. Macgregor as a much more valuable witness than any safe observer on the shore. Here is his account of the permanent wave upon the Reuss. He had found himself engaged in a part of the river where the banks were steep and high, and the course of the stream in curves, which prevented the traveller from seeing far a-head, though he could hear the thunder of the rapids. The water ran in 'a full body,' and as it was broken by rocks at the sides Mr. Macgregor thought it best to keep in mid-stream, notwithstanding its greater speed and the consequently increased danger from the breakers. To stop was impossible, and as for landing the shores of the river were precipices a hundred feet high! At last the adventurer saw the great permanent wave that he was destined never to forget.

'Right in front, and in the middle, I saw the well-known wave which is always raised when a main stream converges, as it rushes down a narrow neck. The depression or trough of this was about two feet below, and the crest four feet above the level, so that the height of the wave was about six feet.

'Though rather tall it was very thin and sharp-featured, and always stationary in position, though the water composing it was going at a tremendous pace. After this wave there was another smaller one, as frequently happens.

'The boat plunged headlong into the shining mound of water as I clenched my teeth and clutched my paddle. We saw her sharp prow deeply buried, and

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* I know a wave on the Rhone which is of this permanent kind, the shape of it being affected only by the depth of water in the river, and it is perfectly harmless, presenting no more real danger than the smoothest water in a fish-pond; and yet it *looks* most alarming.

before she could rise the mass of solid water struck me with a heavy blow full in the breast, closing round my neck as if cold hands gripped me, and quite taking away my breath.'

The hero of this exciting adventure got quite safely through, and after observing other waves of the same character arrived at the conclusion that 'a sharp wave of this kind never has a rock behind it,' which is a valuable result of experience. Unfortunately, the speed of the current in such places prevents us from ascertaining the position of the rocks over which the canoe passes, and their exact influence in determining the forms of permanent waves.

In *Frost and Fire* Mr. J. F. Campbell tells us that he noticed the height of some permanent waves on the river Tornea in Sweden, and he estimates it at ten feet at least. He did not go through any of these waves, as the boatmen were able to skirt the shore and avoid them.*

Though the current of a river increases danger by carrying a boat towards an obstacle, it at the same time diminishes danger, in most cases, by making the obstacle betray its own existence through some agitation of the surface. It may happen, however, that the agitation is not of a very obvious character. A curious instance of this occurred to me on one of the large French rivers, and I mention it here as a digression illustrative of this part of the subject. I was with a friend, in a centre-board sailing-boat,† when we perceived a peculiar glistening line going out into the river. He directed my attention to it, but I took it for a line of local calm. Shortly after we were upon it, and our centre-board was caught laterally on one of those subaqueous walls that are built by the engineers to deflect the current. Our vessel had great stability and therefore did not quite capsize, and we were detained long enough over the wall to see it clearly in the transparent water. The lesson about that particular appearance was quite worth the temporary vexation. On the other hand, I remember sailing straight over some rocks in a lake, their existence being suspected by nobody, and there was no appearance to give a hint of their presence. In that case, as we went straight at them, and were not carried laterally by wind or

* The open Swedish boats would be swamped in waves of this description. Mr. Macgregor's canoe was decked with the exception of the opening for his body, and this was covered with a macintosh sheet. The water got in through the openings, but not in quantity sufficient to sink the boat.

† For non-nautical readers it may be explained as essential to the clearness of the text that a centre-board is a sort of moveable keel that can be raised in shallows or lowered in deep water at pleasure.

current, the centre-board struck them but rose and fell without injury; a heavy, deep-keeled yacht would have wrecked herself upon them. Now in canoe rivers there is generally current enough to betray a sunken rock, at least by a slight trouble of the surface, a gentle seething of the water, as if something pushed it up from below like the rising of a spring, and there may be a little swirl or two just beyond it. I am, however, quite unable to give any precise description of appearances by which the reader may judge of the nearness of a rock to the surface. It is a matter of the greatest interest to canoe travellers, yet even Mr. Macgregor, one of the most observant as well as the boldest of that fraternity, admits that the appearance of the water does not always give a legible indication of its depth above a sunken rock. I remember once turning a corner in a rapid and coming upon one of those treacherous round black boulders that are often nearer to the surface than they appear, with the consequence of an immediate upset. My companion followed in a few minutes and repeated the performance on the same stone with the most ludicrous precision and exactness.

Rivers of the class we are now considering have an advantage over those reputed navigable in the far greater variety of surface which they present. The quiet parts of their course appear to gain a great restfulness from the contrast with the turmoil of the rapids. In the absence of sailing-vessels and towing-paths trees are allowed to grow freely on both sides, and as the shores of such rivers are often rugged and useless for agriculture, there is no interference with a multitude of minor plants that would not have a chance of a natural existence on land accessible to the plough. Besides this, the dampness of the air in the neighbourhood of streams is in itself a constant encouragement to all plants that love the water, so that the consequence of these united conditions is simply the creation of a long natural garden, through which the river winds, and which is constantly revealing to the canoe traveller fresh scenes of beauty far beyond anything that the most skilful human gardener could imagine or the wealthiest patron realise. Edgar Poë, in his tale of *The Domain of Arnheim*, felt bound to describe something that was not nature, because the subject of his invention was the power of wealth to create artificial beauty, but in reading his account of the voyage of the ivory canoe—the 'light canoe of ivory stained with arabesque devices in vivid scarlet, both within and without'—which was impelled by an unseen agency towards the evening sun, I have remembered voyages of at least equal beauty, though there was nothing magical about them. Poë, in fact, appears to have felt some embarrass-

ment about painting the lily of Nature and gilding her refined gold. He had to show the power of wealth in improving a canoe river, and the means he adopted to that end was to remove all *débris* and have a wall on the river side 'of one continuous rock, formed by cutting perpendicularly the once rugged precipice of the stream's southern bank.' The costliness of such an undertaking is more evident than the improvement it might be supposed to effect. For me, I prefer the ruggedness of the natural precipice, and have no objection to the *débris*. A lover of nature, with the wealth needed to create the *Domain of Arnheim*, might here and there remove obstructions; he might blast a dangerous rock or drag out a fallen tree, but he would respect the ruggedness of the precipice, and value its colouring of grey or golden lichen and green moss.

Amidst the many beautiful scenes passed through by the present writer on rivers navigable with a canoe, he remembers none more perfectly to his taste than those long-secluded pools of tranquil water, deep towards the steeper shore, and passing into shallows with yellow sands or clean pebbles on the other, and shaded by a long roof of summer foliage, through which the green light filtered softly, whilst here and there a ray of unbroken sunshine glittered on some distant ripple. There are places of that kind as long as several cathedrals joined together, and so peaceful that no monastic cloister ever offered more perfect peace. Quite out of the lines of traffic, guarded by their own rocks and by distant rapids against all commercial navigation, too remote from hotels to be visited by the tourist or studied habitually by the painter, inaccessible by steam-launches on the water or any wheeled vehicle on the shore, these lonely pools and bowers seem prepared by Nature for the one man in the canoe, who slowly floats from end to end of them in a trance of tranquil happiness, reposing himself after past perils, and husbanding his forces for perils yet to come. Only one other scene is more inviting to poetic rest. After a tortuous and anxious passage through gloomy shades at night, the canoe may sometimes emerge upon an open reach of still water that seems lengthened to infinity by mist, and (just working enough to keep a gentle motion) the traveller may float on and on in the moonlight till it seems as if all life were left behind, and as if the silent waters before him

'Led on to the end of the world.'

It is rather unfortunate, after what might have been a quiet ending of our chapter, to have to consider a state of things that is destructive of all quietness, but I cannot omit some description of floods on rivers of this class.

The first and most obvious effect of a flood is to destroy the transparence of the water by charging it heavily with sediment in a state of suspension. This is destructive of beauty in two different ways, as it not only at once puts an end to the pleasure of seeing the bottom in moderate depths, but it interferes with the beauty of the reflections, which lose richness and truth when they do not cease to exist. The water is no longer the mirror that it was, but a surface of very liquid mud if the banks of the stream are of alluvial soils. In countries where the floods come from peat regions over granite the water is not so muddy, but brown from the peat-colouring, which passes into ochrous yellows when stirred almost into foam, whilst the foam itself, that may be seen circulating in large masses in the eddies, is of a warm white, like slightly discoloured ivory.

The loss of beauty by the destruction, total or partial, of reflective power is accompanied by the loss of peace. In ordinary times a canoe river is tumultuous in some parts, but entirely peaceful in others, like those human lives that have the happy variety of energetic and quiet days, but in times of flood the disturbed and sullied water is utterly incapable of rest. The stream then hurries over those very places where most it loved to linger. Even its broadest surfaces, that might be expected to be calm in their swiftness, are vexed by swirls that tell of trouble below.

The effect of floods on rapids is to increase their strength and tumult up to a certain point, but if the flood passes that point the rapid appears less terrible, because most of its rocks are now hidden under water, and the level of the pool below the rapid is raised, so that it seems as if the current had not so far to fall. The danger of descending a rapid may thus be reduced in flood-time, though it would not be safe to count upon increased safety in all cases, as the existence of new eddies might be not less perilous than the narrow passages between the rocks, and a rock that is hidden may be more dangerous than one that is clearly seen. However this may be, it is certain that the fury of the water is more visible in the intermediate stage of a flood when it rages against the rocks than in a subsequent and more complete stage when it has concealed them.

The best of a flood is its fury. At a distance from seas and volcanoes

a wild river in time of flood is the grandest manifestation of the forces of nature that is accessible to us. We see it carry down trees, and remove bridges, whilst now and then the body of some unfortunate animal bears witness to the ruthlessness of the blind power of water. In Mr. Graham's noble picture of 'A Spate in the Highlands,' as in that description by Ariosto, which has been already quoted, the indifference of the natural power is indicated by the destruction of the bridge. Mr. Graham has brought the peril still more home to us, without making a tragedy of it, by means of the herdsman who is not yet out of danger.

A picture can convey a good idea of the motion of water, though on canvas it must be an arrested motion; but it inevitably misses one great expression of natural power, the overwhelming noise. The roar of waters over rocks and against precipices has often been compared to thunder, a word much better applied to the occasional booming sound of the avalanche. Flood-waters make a continuous, steady, confused roar, in which it is impossible to distinguish the impact of one wave from another, and the general strength of the roar in the worst parts of a river is enough to make a powerful human voice inaudible. I know a house that happens to be situated on a little cliff very near to a tumultuous rapid, and one can imagine what it must be in the time of the winter floods to lie awake in one of its chambers and listen throughout the dark and dreary night to that ceaseless hurrying of the waters. When an army passes in the night-time there may be an interval between its regiments and a variety between the tramp of infantry, the trot of cavalry, the steady rumble of artillery, but here there is no interval, no variety, no relief. Through the long hours the roar of the waters goes on without one moment's pause or respite, and when the grey dawn comes the noise continues still.

CHAPTER XXIX.

Navigable Rivers.

THE broad distinction between these rivers and all those that we have previously been considering is in the equability of their course. It is not in the width of the river, as a river may in many places be ten times as wide as a canal, and yet not classed as navigable for barges. It is not in the speed, as there are mechanical means of hauling barges up swift currents, and even the Rhone, which is reputed to be the swiftest stream in Europe, is navigable from the Lac du Bourget to the Mediterranean. Neither does the distinction consist in the quantity of water that the stream discharges. The Saône, in ordinary times, discharges but little water for a river of its size, and yet it is the most navigable of all rivers, because the current is almost everywhere equally peaceful and the depth sufficient.

The equable continuity of a 'navigable' river gives the traveller on its waters an assurance of peaceful progress like that of settled prosperity. There is water enough beneath his keel; there will be water enough an hour hence, a day hence; the current will always allow room enough for easy navigation. Here the excitement and danger of the tumultuous rapid are unknown. The vessel will not be arrested by fallen trunks of trees, nor shattered upon rocks; it will float more or less swiftly, but in safety always.

These navigable rivers have from time immemorial supplied similes to preachers and moralists which, as I have observed elsewhere, might have been more appropriately taken from rapids, if ideas derived from canoe travelling had not been unfamiliar until recent years. The best expression that I remember hearing applied to a navigable river was in a sermon by a French bishop, though possibly he may not have been the originator of it. '*Un fleuve*,' he said, 'c'est une route qui marche,' and he compared it with human life which carries the traveller along with it. The defect of the analogy is that the river voyager may cast anchor or fasten his vessel to the shore, whilst the stream that carries us to eternity has neither anchorage nor any shore that is of use to us.

The idea that rivers are moving roads has, however, a certain grandeur in itself and an applicability that will endure as long as the

human race makes use of them. There are no roads in the world so beautiful as their shining surfaces, no roads so broad as the bird's flight from shore to shore, and there is no travelling so stately in combined spaciousness and peacefulness as a boat voyage on some noble stream. The canoe is delightfully adventurous, and affords an excellent pastime during the years of unimpaired vigour, but the absence of real security in rapids, and the frequent interruptions from shallows and other obstacles, deprive the traveller of all except a very temporary peace. The broad and navigable river accords better with the dignity of age. Colonel Wolseley, in the prime of life, might shoot the rapids of the Winnipeg in a canoe, but Richelieu, in the evening of his days, was drawn against the current of the Rhone in a barge 'with a stately chamber hung with crimson velvet, "à feuillage sur fond d'or."' There is nothing in the history of boat voyages more strangely poetical than that slow progress of Richelieu from Tarascon to Lyons. He left Tarascon on the seventeenth of August, 1642, and did not reach Lyons till the third of September. Behind his boat was attached another, containing his prisoner, De Thou,* whom the invalid in the gorgeous chamber was quietly intending to have executed when he arrived at his destination. Then came three other barges containing things necessary to the pomp of his Eminence, such as his gold and silver plate, his tapestry and the furniture employed in embellishing his temporary resting-places on the shore. On each side of the river rode companies of light horse, with trumpeters 'answering each other, and awakening the echoes of the rocks.' Sometimes the Cardinal landed, and then he was carried ashore and placed in a chamber richly prepared for his reception. If there was any difficulty about his litter it was taken in through a breach in the wall.†

This, I believe, is the most remarkable river voyage of which we have authentic record. The body of Richelieu lay half-dead in the midst of his floating luxury (it died completely in the December of the same year), but the brain was as clear and masterful as ever. During all those days, when the swift Rhone washed without ceasing the sides of the Cardinal's barge, he lay thinking, thinking, feeling every minute

* Henri Martin, in his history, mentions one prisoner only as being in the boat, and says that Cinq Mars joined him afterwards. *Un Manuscrit du Temps*, quoted by Joanne, says that Cinq Mars and De Thou were both in the boat. The details given above are derived from this source.

† It seems probable that Richelieu enjoyed this demonstration of his power, for Henri Martin tells us that when the Cardinal afterwards travelled by land he had 'a magnificent litter so lofty and so wide that the gates of the cities were too narrow for it to pass, and it was necessary to demolish part of the walls to receive the Cardinal-King.'

the bitterness of physical decline, and foreseeing the inevitable end, but making his last journey in the undiminished pomp of his power, and conscious that his enfeebled fingers still held a kingdom within their grasp.

The serviceableness of navigable rivers to the convenience of mankind is curiously variable with different stages of civilisation. In the beginning they are the only roads. Afterwards roads are made on the shore, and the river is a means of transit for heavy merchandise. Then steam navigation restores its former predominance, and it is once again the great highway. Long quays are built at the river-side towns. From morning till night they are covered with goods and lively with the animation of traffic. This state of things looks as if it would be permanent, yet is, in reality, most transitory, for the increase of trade itself suggests the construction of lateral railways, and then the steamers rot at their anchorage, and grass grows between the stones on the landing-places. If the river is not quite absolutely and perfectly convenient for barges, the modern engineer has in reserve another great rival to its claims. He can construct a lateral canal, and when he has done this for the slow traffic, and made railways for the more rapid transit, the river is left to itself almost as completely as when the prehistoric inhabitant first launched his hollowed tree. This progress and decline of commerce on the great rivers is completely exemplified in France. After the employment of steam-boats, and before the construction of the railway from Paris to Marseilles, there was a great traffic on the Saône and Rhone, with Chalon* for its *tête de ligne.* That traffic is now so small a matter that the waves from a public steamer rock your sailing-boat just once a-day. For half the year there is but one public steamer weekly from Avignon to Valence, for the Rhone has a railway on each bank. The people want a canal also, and if ever it is made the broad current of the Rhone will only be descended by the great rafts or crossed by the ferry-boats that go by the force of the stream.† By the Loire the lateral canal has been long established, and for many a league the river flows through a solitude of sand or a dreary waste of pebbles, the dominant feeling about it in the minds of the farmers being not any gratitude for its benefits, but a well-grounded apprehension of its floods.

In the history of a very modern colony the river-steamer comes

* English writers generally, but incorrectly, spell Chalon-sur-Saône like Châlons-sur-Marne.

† They are attached to a running wheel on a wire that crosses the river at a considerable height, and when the boat is kept in a diagonal position by the steersman the force of the current impels it towards the opposite shore.

immediately after the first explorers, and may retain its importance much longer than in a rich old country like France, where the civil engineer is so busy. The common practice of introducing a steamer in every view of the great American rivers is only an appropriate reference to the white man's way of linking the centres of civilisation with its remotest outposts. The river steamer is the colonist's best friend, so that even when these vessels are entirely wanting in beauty we cannot wish them out of the picture. They are the least costly of all the servants of humanity, and therefore best appreciated by the poor. 'If it were not for the boat,' said a poor woman to me on the Rhone steamer, 'I never could afford to go south to see my mother, as the railway is beyond my means; but now we meet from time to time.' It is quite possible that a feeling of sympathy with the humble classes may have induced Turner to tolerate steam-boats in his drawings. He often travelled upon them and mixed with the common people in the most unpretending way.

A public river steamer gives us landscape and humanity at the same time, so that when one of the two ceases to be interesting we have only to turn to the other. If, however, our object is to study landscape, or simply to allow ourselves to receive impressions from nature, it is better to be more alone. The steamer makes a foreground in itself, and a populous one, in the midst of Nature's most perfect solitudes; besides obtruding itself in every picture, it moves so rapidly that the length of the reaches has not time to impress itself adequately on the mind. A new class of aquatic travellers in the present day have a passion for being entirely alone with Nature. This is a most remarkable result of our present social state, in which city life is becoming so predominant. Not only do people live together in towns, but they travel together in great numbers, and this begets the desire to be alone. Our ancestors were often alone on horseback in their health-giving necessary journeys, and no doubt they enjoyed the landscape in their own way without saying much about it. There is quite sufficient evidence in mediaeval romances to prove that if the knights-errant felt like the poets who described them they must have enjoyed their rides through the open country, along the narrow, rough roads of those days. Even in *Don Quixote* there is a great deal of solitary, or all but solitary, enjoyment of travel through regions of very various character. This lonely travel which formerly came to so many people of different station by mere accident has, in our day, to be sought for consciously; and as the painters have taught us to admire the lakes and rivers, we want to go back, in our own way, to that independent, leisurely travel of which modern

ON THE THAMES

Original Etching by STEPHEN PARRISH

This plate may be taken as an example of a landscape in which the material (as in many of Turner's river-subjects) is almost entirely artificial. The sky and water alone are Nature's work, everything else being built by men either as floating or stationary construction. I have spoken elsewhere of the qualities shown by Mr. Parrish as an etcher. The reader will see them for himself in the plate, which (so far as the scale permits) is fairly representative of the artist's work on other rivers.

progress has deprived us. There has never been a time in the history of boat-building when so much thought and intelligence were expended on the construction of boats to be navigated by one person. In every country where yachting is practised at all the newspapers tell us of long, solitary voyages; and the heroes of them have in many cases preserved the results of their experience in books of travel which, if not always of much literary value, are sure to contain the record of that direct and personal observation which is only to be gained by a long intimacy with nature.

It would be out of place, in a work of this kind, to insert narratives of boat voyages, but I may observe that all real knowledge of navigable rivers must be gained by their means. A river can never be understood by coming across the course of it here and there. A voyage on a public steamer is better and is often the most that we have time to accomplish, but it is still far inferior to personal and independent investigation in a small boat. To make this plainer let the reader imagine a place where the current becomes swifter than elsewhere, and of various degrees of swiftness in different parts of the river's breadth. You ascend it in the public steamer almost without a thought, the huge machine that carries you makes you unaware of the motions in the water beneath its keel and paddles; but to sail up that place in a small boat, even with a strong and favourable wind, you have to study it. You have to find out the weak points of the current, if there are any, and after seeing your boat apparently stationary, though really sailing at a good speed, you discover that other parts of the stream are not running so swiftly, and that they may be ascended. If I went into minute detail and described real experiences of this kind with the help of diagrams, the reader would easily perceive what an education in the ways of currents is the habit of using small boats dependent on oar and sail. But to understand currents is to understand a great part of what has to be learned about rivers. Again, on the public steamer we easily fall into a state of almost complete indifference about the winds. On a boat that has no mechanical propeller we study the wind incessantly, and if we have any artistic turn we unite the nautical observation of the wind with an artist's observation of its pictorial effects upon the water. On a small boat we are near the water and feel its motions, we become so closely associated with the life of the landscape that the poetical idea about actually sharing it is scarcely an exaggeration in our case.

The true temper of a lover of rivers, or philopotamus, if there were such a word, is to feel happy anywhere on the river, and to have such

a comprehensive conception of its interest that even the duller parts of it gain an ideal charm from the beautiful parts that may be far away. A river is not simply what the traveller can see at any single moment of time. The length of its course, the variety of the scenes through which it flows, the cities that it passes, the mightier river that it joins perhaps a hundred miles away, or the sea in which, it may be at a much greater distance, it ultimately loses all individuality; all these are vaguely or clearly present in the memory whenever we see its waters or even simply hear its name. There are few rivers where positively dull and ugly scenery is more frequently met with, or for longer spaces, than on the Nile, yet it would be impossible for any educated traveller to come upon the Nile, even in the very dullest and ugliest league of it, without some thought of its ancient temples and pyramids, its cataracts famous in the days of Herodotus, and the mystery about its origin that endured so wonderfully long in spite of the keenest curiosity in the cleverest nations of the world. Even the very solution of that mystery, if it takes away the glamour of the unknown, has given a new glory to every league of the great river by associating it as closely with two enormous fresh-water inland seas, as the Rhone is associated with Lake Leman. In the unfurnished and unstimulated imagination of some wretched fellah, whose monotonous days are spent in drawing water for irrigation, the Nile may be little more than the one dull reach of it that he sees; but an Englishman thinks of it all at once, from the equatorial waters to the Mediterranean.

I have taken the Nile as the most august example; but the same is true in minor degrees of every river that has magnificent natural or historical associations. There are parts of the Loire, for leagues together, that have no visible interest, and yet I have never come upon the Loire, in any part of its course, without an emotion that had little to do with the water and beach before me. The mere length of the Loire, more than a thousand kilomètres, is enough to impress an Englishman accustomed to the short rivers of his own country; but, besides this, we have a quantity of more or less confused geographical, historical, and artistic associations that cast, for us, a sort of enchantment over every mile of the Loire, and even over the very letters of its name.* We remember its birth amongst the mountains of the Ardèche, and how at first it

* The power of such associations even over a *single letter* is curiously demonstrated by the nearly similar names of the two rivers Loire and Loir, the first suggesting a host of ideas, the second not nearly so many, even to those who know, whilst it is absolutely without associations for most people.

seems as though it would join the Rhone, but turns aside in time to escape this obscure fate, and chooses the path that leads to a long course of existence and to fame. We remember how nearly in its early course, it passes by the mysterious deep blue waters of the Lac d'Issartes, that have no visible issue, the wildness of its own passage through the mountains of the departments that take their names from it, the more peaceful progress through the plain of the Nièvre, and past the old ducal city of Nevers. After that when the Loire takes its great curve to the west, the historic interest increases, and we think of Orleans, Blois, Tours, Angers, Nantes, with a degree of romantic interest dependent upon our knowledge of the past and our value for the visible remnants of its architecture. The illustrations of Turner have greatly increased the poetry of the Loire for every Englishman who is able to appreciate the fine arts. Even if we know how different are his dreams from the reality, that reality has gained a glory from the dreams.

The comparison of rivers with lakes may help us to understand the effect of rivers on the mind. A lake impresses by unity, a river by continuity. In the abstract conceptions of geometry a lake might be represented by a circle or oval, a river by a line. A lake may be more impressive to those who see, a river to those who think, remember, imagine. The poetry of the lake may be intense, but it is soon told, in some canto like the *The Island* of Scott, some verses like the stanzas of Lamartine. The poetry of the river is long though it is not endless, for it is sure to finish at last in the absorbing sea.

From what has been already said the reader may be prepared for the opinion that although many parts of a river might be thoroughly dull and uninteresting if each of them were a ditch without issue, they are never without majesty if they are parts of a great whole. This may be better appreciated by the description of a remembered scene.

I was with a friend in a sailing-boat on a river, almost without current, when the stars came out and the very faintest breath of air just kept our little vessel in motion. The banks of the stream darkened quickly as the evening advanced and were in themselves singularly monotonous, being merely the cutting effected by the river itself in an immense plain, with here and there a few bushes but hardly any trees. As for buildings the only one to be seen for several miles was a grey old house on the water's edge that indicated a stopping-place for barges. This was slowly left behind and then our solitude was complete. A thin, young moon gave us a little light; we spread all our canvas to catch the faintest breeze, and floated dreamily on for hours. In this way we passed through

what is commonly believed to be the ugliest part of a long river—so ugly that people think it is to be avoided—and yet those hours were full of a deep charm that only a poet could adequately express. The monotony of the apparently endless shores that made a band of darkness between water and sky, the resemblance of one reach to another, as we passed through an uncounted succession of reaches, each like a long quiet pond, the difficulty of knowing exactly where we were in the absence of definite landmarks, the knowledge that we were slowly traversing a great plain that we could not see, the perfect silence, the solitude as complete as if we had been in some unexplored country; all these influences, and that of the quiet stars, may have helped to make the river poetical that night. Still, there were other influences also, and I believe that the most powerful of these had nothing to do with our immediate surroundings. We knew that the river flowed on for hundreds of miles before it reached the Mediterranean, that it passed through innumerable scenes of natural beauty and historical interest, that 'castled crags' and 'towered cities' were not rare along its course, that the complete absence of human interest which characterised it where we happened to be was by no means characteristic of the whole. We knew that Caesar had crossed it with his legions, and the extreme slowness of the current where we sailed was associated for ever with one of his rare expressions that indicate some observation of nature. We knew that the dark shore to the right had been the frontier of the kingdom of France, and the dark shore to the left the frontier of the great mediaeval 'Empire,' so that to this day the bargemen neither say right and left, nor starboard and port, but 'Empire' and 'Royaume,' still.

Much may have been due to the mystery of a calm and beautiful night, and to

> 'that clear obscure,
> So softly dark, and darkly pure,'

which remains with starlight when the moon is only a crescent and has not strength enough to destroy it; but I have sailed on the same waters in the early morning when there was no help from effect and yet found another order of poetical suggestion. Then the sky was dull with uniform cloud, the day broke in dim grey light, the distance was pale and faint, so that the far-away villages looked like old water-colour drawings, timidly tinted at first and faded for many a year. The river itself was of a pale green, rippled by occasional breezes, the banks reddish with a few green bushes and edged with grass often overhanging or falling down in sods where most undermined, the monotony of the reaches

being broken only by the occasional flight of aquatic birds or the slow passage of a buzzard that took its station successively on points of land along the shore. The scenery was like some broad Dutch canal on a dull grey morning, yet it had still a great charm for me. I profoundly enjoyed the complete unity of quiet in light and colour and slow motion, the freshness of the early morning air, and the happy fearlessness of the birds who knew that we were not enemies.

These effects of extreme peace on rivers, and many other effects of which peace is the dominant suggestion, are entirely incompatible with any great swiftness of current. I have never seen an effect of real quiet upon the Rhone, for however quiet the sky may be, however still the wind, the motion of the water that ceaselessly hurries to the sea, is of itself such an example of the real restlessness there is in nature that it brings us too close to the truth for the illusion of repose to be any longer possible. I say 'the illusion of repose,' because there is no real repose in the universe. Let a man be idly sailing at night by the feeblest breathings of the summer air on a stream whose current is imperceptible and under a cloudless sky, the very feeling of rest that he enjoys is due to the perfection of certain regulated motions. If his blood flowed irregularly he would feel agitated, if the nervous circulation were impeded he would feel distressed, his clear sight of the tranquil stars is due to an infinite number of ether vibrations that come to him with inconceivable swiftness. The river itself, with its banks and bridges, is flying eastwards ten times as fast as an express train; the stars are in motion, the atoms are rushing about everywhere. Rest there is none, but there may be the illusion of it, one of the sweetest of the deceptions that surround us, and it is a wearisome characteristic of the swift rivers that the feeling of rest is for ever impossible on their surface or by their shores. A boat on the Rhone is like a balloon in the wind; a house by the Rhone is like a rock in a rapid. I remember one with a pretty garden and lawn that comes down to the water, where it ends in a protection of masonry, that is incessantly washed by the green water. If the owner had a rowing-boat he could not pull back to his own stairs; if his child fell in the body would be a mile away before help could be given. The one evil of the Rhone is its perpetual hurry, otherwise it is a delightful river. The water of it is beautiful, the shores are often grand and adorned by castles and towns, but the surface is enlivened by no pleasure-boats. Nobody could sail against such a current and the wind together; nobody could row for any distance against the stream. The tugs that bring up the barges

have a great wheel with big steel teeth shaped like the claws of a lion and it turns on the bed of the river, rising and falling with the varying depth and clutching the stones below. The only natural navigation on the Rhone is that of the great rafts that descend to the south. During the one voyage of their brief existence they go with the stream and belong to it as they once belonged to the forest.

This opposition of character between the Saône and the Rhone, the two rivers that meet and marry at Lyons, is more complete than that between any other two considerable rivers known to me, and I may be excused for dwelling upon it a little in this place, on the principle that an author may give more room to what he knows by his own observation of nature than to what he gets at second-hand from the recorded experience of others. The two elements are necessary, but I imagine that in order to give the second-hand element its full value, we require a close degree of familiarity with one or two natural examples in each kind. I should hardly venture to write about anything in nature without knowing at least one specimen well, not to speak of some slighter acquaintance with other specimens.

The Saône is, I believe, the slowest river in Europe, and possibly the slowest in the world, at least I never heard of any other to equal it in this respect. We have seen how Caesar noticed this 'incredible slowness,' and he would probably have been much surprised if he could have been told that in a future remote from him it would positively be increased; yet this has been effected in some parts of the river's course by the establishment of weirs and locks, which convert the stream above them, for a long distance, into something like an immense mill-pond. This laziness of the current is, however, looked upon as the greatest of merits by the lovers of sail and oar, who have an additional reason for liking the Saône, in the rarity of trees upon its banks and the general flatness of its shores. The wind blows freely in every direction, except as you approach Lyons when the river is enclosed by hills, and consequently you have the up and down winds usual in such cases.

If the Saône is the slowest of rivers, the Rhone is reputed to be the swiftest. There are less known streams of equal *occasional* velocity, and perhaps the Danube may be comparable to the Rhone for considerable distances; but the great characteristic of the Rhone is the steadiness of its pace. From Geneva to Arles it is rapid everywhere, in some parts more than others, yet always rapid. You never come upon a sleepy reach of the Rhone till you get nearly to the level of the

Mediterranean. Here, however, the reader is asked to bear in mind that we are speaking only of the rapidity of water, which is not great in comparison with that of wind, or even of animals. I have made a very careful calculation of the speed of the Rhone between Lyons and Valence, founded upon the difference of the time spent by the steamers in going up and down the river, and it gives me, at low water, an average current just exceeding four miles an hour.* Its speed at Vienne is given by Joanne at two mètres per second, which is about four and a half miles. At those places where the current is most swift I doubt if it reaches seven miles an hour, judging from the known speed of the steamers relatively to the water, and their effective speed relatively to the banks of the river. These rates are, however, much exceeded in times of flood—how much I am unable to ascertain. The average of four miles an hour may be the ordinary speed of the Upper Danube, as Mr. Macgregor considered thirty miles a-day fair work in his canoe† when he descended a rapid part of that river.

After writing the preceding paragraph I cannot resist a reflection which often occurs to me—how destructive of effect the love of exactness is in literature. I am uncomfortably conscious that I have just been spoiling what might have been rather a telling page on the appalling rapidity of the Rhone. A poet would have compared it to an arrow from the bow; one of those prose writers, who are admired for the vigour of their styles, would at least have utilised I know not what fierce and fiery coursers; but what chance of effect remains for an author who begins by admitting that the mighty river he is attempting to describe rolls its waters to the sea at the pace of a good pedestrian? It is in vain for me now, when I have spoilt the subject, to assure the reader that the swirls of a river look quite formidable at five or six miles an hour. He has seen railway engines do fifty and cannot attach the notion of any dangerous rapidity to five. I will therefore say no more about the rush of the water, but have recourse to one of the other powers of nature. It is remarkable about the Saône and the Rhone that the speed of their winds is proportionate in some degree to that attained by their waters. On the Saône the winds are often

* The reader will remark the curious similarity between the speed of the Rhone and that of water in a steep street gutter, which I ascertained by experiment as narrated in a previous chapter.

† If we suppose Mr. Macgregor to have been eight hours on the water, a probable average, and if we take the excess of speed over the current, gained by paddling, as a compensation for the loss of time from occasional stoppages, that would leave about four miles an hour for the speed of the river.

persistent but moderate in their persistence. The summer north wind, or 'bise,' is delightful for sailing purposes. The river is covered with innumerable little green waves that dance and glitter in the sunshine, the wind blows steadily down what seems an interminable lake and engages you to reduce your canvas by one reef, but gives you no real anxiety. You sail on for many a mile under a blue sky with white clouds, your white sails on the green water as they in the blue heaven, and the green shores glide away, separated by faint blue hills from the lower sky, and the seagulls play merrily in the pure air, and you pass a hundred fields and châteaux, and rich villages bright in the joyous light, the wind singing a merry allegro all the time.

The reader may here object that such a wind is not slow like the water that flows *incredibili lenitate*. True, but everything is relative, and now let him see the *mistral* on the Rhone.

It is generally a fine-weather wind, for the simple reason that cloudy weather is not very common in Provence. In the north of England, and in Scotland, we associate the ideas of sunshine and repose. Our tempests of wind are generally accompanied by flying rain-clouds, often by incessant rain, and we have no experience, in our own country, of a pure wind-storm lasting for many days together without a cloud in the blue sky. In the lower part of the Rhone's course this happens every year, and several times in the year. The people do not dislike their mistral, they tell me that they prefer it to rain, such is the happy effect of a patriotic local affection. It is less trying on the river than on the roads where the wonder is how the cart-drivers can endure the glare and the dust together. On the river you have glittering light and storm-waves in the longer reaches (about the size of ordinary lake waves), and as there is no dust, nothing interferes with the intense brilliance and wild animation of nature. I can imagine nothing more exciting than a boat-voyage down the Rhone during the mistral. I have never attempted it, because excitement of that kind would be too much prolonged for pleasure, and because if the wind reached its utmost intensity at any troublesome part of the river, driving the boat on a shoal, one would have to remain there till it abated, without any possibility of shelter. The use of sails, however reduced by reefing, would be entirely out of the question; but the boat would scud well and keep her steerage under bare poles. Without making this wild experiment one may ascertain what the mistral is by simply crossing the long suspension-bridge that joins Beaucaire to Tarascon; and even that is not a complete experience, as there is a bell on the bridge that is rung by

the wind itself when it reaches a certain strength, and then the gates are closed. I happen to be able, however, to give some account of how the bridge was crossed on one occasion, whilst the wind-bell was ringing. An inhabitant of Beaucaire, who occupies a responsible public position in the town, and is, I believe, quite a trustworthy person,* told me that having had occasion to cross the bridge to Tarascon at a time when the mistral was blowing he wished to return the same evening, but the bell had begun to ring and the bridge-keeper refused to let him pass. He then represented that it was necessary for him to be in Beaucaire that night on account of public business, and the gate-keeper gave a reluctant consent on the ground that he did not pass as a private person, but as a functionary risking his life in the service of the public. The first discovery he made was that it was impossible either to walk or stand, but he found it just possible to creep forward on his hands and knees, being a little sheltered by the causeway. Even then he was often compelled to stop, and progressed so slowly that it took an hour and a half to get over four hundred mètres. Neither was the crossing without danger, as the force of the wind striking up from below was powerful enough to tear up many of the planks in the roadway. About fifty of these yielded whilst the adventurer was on the bridge. After this example of the mistral's energy in Provence the reader will perceive that a boat voyage under its guidance might be very exciting, very rapid, but could hardly be a prudent undertaking, and that the use of sails is not to be considered practical.

Every place has its own most characteristic weather. A lake in our West Highlands is best seen under a changeful sky, with enough of rain and wind to give variety to the effects and life to the waters, or perhaps if the scenery is *very* desolate and wild, a drearier and more melancholy effect might bring out its character still better. The lake may either lie stilled in deepening gloom, or be lashed by a raging tempest, when the dark waves whiten and the mountain grows pale behind the showers. The Saône is familiar to me under many phases; but the weather that suits it best is that of a splendid summer's day with a brisk and steady breeze when there has been no flood to make the water turbid and it has its own fine semi-transparent green. In such weather the dominant expression of the Saône is an exhilarating brightness and openness. Its great characteristic is largeness of space, its waters are broad, its reaches long, and it has

* I may add that he comes from the north of France, and is therefore less likely to exaggerate than a Provençal.

an ample margin of level country before the eye is arrested by the boundary of pale blue hills. Anything that interferes with this feeling of open space is a diminution of what is best in the river. With the Rhone the case is different. It is never a very open river until it reaches the plain of the Camargue. Its banks are often steep on both sides, as from Sarras to Tournon, or on one side, as from Tournon to Valence, and during the whole of its course to Arles it has mountainous distances. It seems to me, then, that the Rhone is grandest when its hills look near, and I have never seen it so perfect as in the short southern twilight, after sunset, when the distant mountains are blue and the nearer precipitous banks very dark against the clear heaven with some old castle cut sharply in silhouette. Then the swift waters flow away to the south with a steel-grey surface of ceaseless agitation, and the stars brighten in the unresting wind.

It would be an omission to write a chapter about navigable rivers without alluding to their inundations. All Continental rivers that drain vast areas are subject to great floods. When a brook fills up its rocky bed, and removes here and there a little bridge, and vexes a few farmers by cutting a new channel through their fields, the broad, navigable Continental river overflows provinces and carries anxiety into a hundred cities. At every town there is a river-gauge, and the rising of the water is telegraphed day and night all along the banks. As the possibilities of disaster can be very accurately estimated by previous experience, the people know what they have to do as soon as the probable height of the water is ascertained. They evacuate the lower parts of their dwellings, or abandon them altogether whilst it is yet time. There are many places in the lowlands about the Loire where it would be only prudent for every family to have an ark, as Noah had, in anticipation of the next flood. The people have at least their rude but serviceable flat-bottomed boats, and they are often most skilful in the use of them. In the towns the river is confined at first between the well-built quays, but if the inundation is one of the great calamitous inundations it passes over the quays and fills all the neighbouring streets. The picturesque and irregular square or place at Chalon-sur-Saône, where the old Renaissance church of St. Peter and the Museum are, was entirely inundated in a recent flood, and would have looked quite Venetian if the architecture had been more like 'the stones of Venice,' and the boats mistakable for her gondolas. At Mâcon there are hotels on the quays, and one of them near the bridge has a balcony on the first floor, where the steamer landed her passengers in one of the great floods. What could be more convenient than to

arrive at one's hotel so directly? The passengers stepped in by the window and found themselves at once on the level of the principal rooms. The familiar clatter of the omnibuses in the courtyard had ceased, and their place was occupied by a tank of muddy water that filled it from wall to wall. The effect of these inundations can hardly be realised unless you are familiar with local details. Then you remember the room where you dined in some river-side inn, and learn that when the flood came it was filled like the cabin of a sunken ship. In the heats of summer, when the river is low, and you are wandering in a village that seems at an unapproachably safe elevation on the bank, you suddenly come upon the name of the river, a date, and a short horizontal line chiselled in the stones of a building. Then some native tells you that he remembers seeing the water at that line, and you look round on the sunny gardens, the green plain, the quiet river in its bed rippling to the summer breeze and threatening nobody, you look at this present reality, and only by a strong effort of imagination can you realise that other reality of a river without any visible bounds rushing over a devastated country under a grey and hopeless sky.

The reader is familiar with floods in pictures and newspaper illustrations. He knows how the street becomes a raging torrent, and the women are rescued from windows and balconies in boats; how some wretched man clings to a projecting gas-lamp, and it gives way; how a little crowd collects on the bridge that falls with a sudden crash and the people with it; how agonised cottagers in the country sit on their thatched roofs and see the deluge rising and rising till some boat comes just in time to save them; how the surface of the water is strewn over with floating household goods; how cattle swim for their lives; how in the intervals between the flying clouds a ghastly moon looks down on a desolation that is neither sea nor lake, nor anything resembling a river, but a vast, indefinite chaos of muddy water and everything that it can carry away.

This is the tragic and sensational aspect of the great inundations, only to be described with perfect force in fiction, because the reader never realises scenes quite beyond common experience until his sympathies are engaged on behalf of individual actors or sufferers whom he can believe that he knows personally. Those inundations that I have myself witnessed have not been in this extreme degree, but were still important enough as floods of the second order. There are rivers such as the Durance, and even the Loire, which are not in their perfection unless flooded, because their vast, stony channels look empty in ordinary

times, therefore such rivers in minor floods have not any *appearance* of being flooded, but have simply the aspect of very majestic rivers flowing full from bank to bank. Amongst lowland streams I have seen nothing comparable to the Loire in this condition, when all its shoals and sand-banks are hidden, and the water flows under every arch of its interminable bridges. If the wind happens to be strong at such times the great reaches, with the marine birds flying over them, remind us of estuaries, though the Atlantic may still be far away, and it is difficult to believe that such noble expanses of stormy water are of little use for navigation.

There are times when a minor flood produces no terror, but only a kind of resignation, the result of repeated experience, as people accept the attacks of maladies that have grown familiar from habit. I remember observing, during an inundation of the Seine, how the people kept up communication between the little spaces of ground that had become islands by slowly driving vehicles on submerged roads. The lower houses were abandoned and full of water; those on higher sites were islanded. The flooded lands were of vast extent, but there was little appearance of calamity. A full moon shone peacefully over what seemed a great smooth lake, nobody was excited or apprehensive, as the worst was over, and we were free to admire the watery world around us, without feeling guilty of any want of sympathy for human trouble.

As a great river approaches the sea its current usually (but not invariably) becomes slower and its character changes. If it has the luck to empty itself into a marine inlet like the Clyde, the Thames, or the Severn, the transition from independent existence to the final absorption in the infinite is so gradual that it is impossible to say where the river really dies. There are few experiences more interesting than a voyage beginning in a river and continuing in the open sea. The subtle and gradual change of character from fluvial to marine existence can hardly be defined at any one place, and yet we feel it to be continually operating, till at length the change is accomplished. The river widens, the tide flows up and down, the air is full of odours of the sea, the shipping increases in quantity, and finally, almost before we are aware of it, the receding land has become of little comparative importance, and the sea is heaving around us. When a great river divides itself in a delta the impression produced is one of the most unsatisfactory that can be imagined. Just at the very time when it ought to be majestic, when it ought to keep its forces well together and die with all possible dignity, it proceeds to scatter them in such a manner that instead of being a mighty and magnificent river it becomes several

insignificant ones. The misfortune is enhanced by the usually monotonous character of deltas. As they are merely plains formed of alluvial deposits they can offer little variety, and the only charm they are likely to possess is the melancholy charm of desolation. The great plain of La Camargue, in the delta of the Rhone, has this attraction for artists and writers interested in all the aspects of nature, that it presents melancholy effects with a perfection of unity not easily found in any civilised country. Imagine a space of more than a hundred and sixty thousand acres with no other variety than pools of brackish water, salty sands, wretched grasses, and thinly scattered tamarisc shrubs. 'As you go farther into this solitude,' says M. Lenthéric, 'the vegetation becomes poorer and more puny, there are more low marshy places, the sandy desert extends to the horizon. There is nothing to relieve the eye. The bare and flat soil glitters under the crude light of Provence; it is all sadness, desolation, fever, almost death.' The southern French painters are fond of representing this region, sometimes in the intolerable glare of noon when the white sand half blinds one and the few shadows cut upon it sharply, sometimes in the late evening when the long pools glisten under the dying light and the horizon is hot and red, and the herdsmen ride swiftly after the half-wild cattle as they do in Texas or Colorado. All this is dreary enough, and yet, when taken in some connexion with the historic associations of Arles, the last city on the undivided Rhone, it makes a finish for a noble river that is at least well removed from the commonplace, and in that respect much superior to the ending of the divided Rhine in Holland, where the pastures are undoubtedly richer but without any element of romance. The Rhine flows from poetry to dull prose; the Rhone from bright and animated poetry to that which is dreary, depressing, melancholy, but poetry still that touches all the children of the Muse.

There is something in the ending of such a noble river which no prose composition can adequately describe. These themes need the assistance of some stately rhythmic measure; and, therefore, that this chapter may end in a manner worthy of its subject, I quote Arnold's description of the Oxus in *Sohrab and Rustum*, which has always seemed to me the finest account in literature of the conclusion of fluvial existence :—

> 'But the majestic river floated on,
> Out of the mist and hum of that low land,
> Into the frosty starlight, and there moved,
> Rejoicing, through the hush'd Chorasmian waste,
> Under the solitary moon;—he flow'd

Right for the polar star, past Orgunjè,
Brimming, and bright, and large ; then sands begin
To hem his watery march, and dam his streams,
And split his currents ; that for many a league
The shorn and parcell'd Oxus strains along
Through beds of sand and matted rushy isles—
Oxus, forgetting the bright speed he had
In his high mountain cradle in Pamere,
A foil'd circuitous wanderer—till at last
The long'd-for dash of waves is heard, and wide
His luminous home of waters opens, bright
And tranquil, from whose floor the new-bathed stars
Emerge, and shine upon the Aral sea.'

CHAPTER XXX.

Man's Work on Rivers.

THERE is this difference between rivers on the one hand and lakes and seas on the other, that the labours of men are often very conspicuous on rivers, whilst on lakes they are much less conspicuous, and the appearance of the sea is very little affected by them, except in estuaries and harbours. The narrowness of a river tempts men to the construction of bridges. The length of a river makes some kind of crossing inevitable (whereas traffic will go a long round to avoid the crossing of a lake*), and as the population is usually denser in the neighbourhood of a river than at a distance from it, and the towns on both sides not very widely separated, the desire for easy communication has always been great, and has reached in modern times a degree of impatience unknown to previous generations. What modern people expect from their public authorities is simply that rivers shall cease to exist as obstacles, and be preserved only as conveniences; the modern ideal is that you should find a bridge wherever you want it, and not be able to discover any appreciable difference between the road over the water and the roads upon the land.

Besides the multiplication of bridges we have a great increase in quays and embankments, which has been caused indirectly by the habit of great undertakings in railways, just as the great French aqueduct at Roquefavour was executed in our century less because such things had been done by the ancient Romans than because French engineers had been building long railway viaducts. The desire for activity amongst engineers and their great influence with governments have placed the French rivers entirely in their hands. This subject has been touched upon in the chapter on French scenery, but must be recurred to here because the influence of French engineers has extended to other countries.

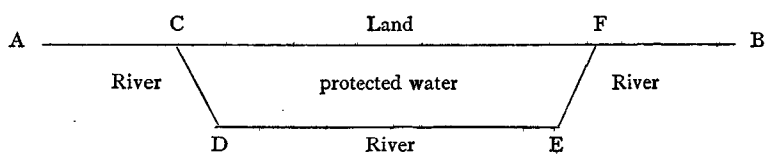
* There are many instances of this. One that is very familiar to me is the road round the head of Loch Awe, from Inverary to Oban. Lakes do not usually intercept land traffic very much, they only increase mileage. I remember being told by a railway engineer who was planning a new line with what seemed to me an unlucky round-about that it was 'not against the interest of the Company, as the passengers and goods paid by the mile.'

The quays of Paris produced the Thames embankment, the canals in France led to those of Suez and Panama.

The 'canalisation' of a river does not mean that it is turned into a canal, but simply that the impediments to navigation are smoothed away by science. The means employed are all perfectly familiar; every difficulty is known and has its own ascertained remedy. The action of currents is so far understood that the banks can be protected against them, which is done either by submerged walls or by lining the bank itself with a sloping case of masonry. The submerged walls have no effect on the landscape, except that they produce a slight alteration on the surface of the water above them; their action on the natural bank of the river is simply conservative,* but the masonry along the bank itself is destructive of natural beauty. As there is a towing-path on one side of a canalised river it often happens that the towing-path and the wall are on the same bank, the one clearing away all trees, the other destroying the minor vegetation of the bank, so that the engineer has been successful in shaving away all that Nature had done to make the water-side interesting. It is remarkable, too, how much the presence of human works deducts from the feeling of solitude. For me there is no perfect solitude where the results of human toil are visible, though I take at least as much interest in what men do as those who care nothing for unspoiled nature.

The engineers have a plan for dividing the current in order to weaken it, which when the river is low produces a result very remote

* The nature of these submerged walls cannot be well understood without a diagram.



Let A, B, represent the natural bank of the river, then a wall, C, D, E, F, is built under water to protect the bank. It will be seen that this wall encloses a space of water that remains quiet. I remember a steam-yacht rushing on the wall C, D, till the fore part of the keel rose high in the air. The owner, with great presence of mind, ordered his men to go forward, and their weight got the boat down into the enclosed space, but once in they had to get out again by making the boat climb over the wall F, E, which they accomplished in the same manner. If the yacht had not been very strongly constructed, and of rather small dimensions, she would have broken her back. In sailing one has to be well on the look-out for these subaqueous walls, as they may catch a keel or a centre-board, and if the current *over* the wall is rather powerful you shortly discover that the enclosure C, D, E, F, has been converted, for you, into a swimming-bath. I may add that although these walls do not cross the river they are always called *barrages*, which gives an Englishman a totally erroneous impression, as he is sure to think that *barrage* means a weir, which it does on small rivers where there are no subaqueous walls.

from the picturesque. They find a long shallow in mid-stream and erect upon it a mole as long as itself, which is covered at high-water but exposed in times of drought, when it presents rather a muddy appearance as to colour, with extreme monotony of form. At high-water the current rushes laterally over these moles, which are only less disagreeable than the 'barrages' because you are not a prisoner in an enclosed space on the other side.

The great weirs, with the long locks for steamers and trains of barges, are admirable achievements of engineering, and most useful institutions, but they do not directly contribute to the beauty of a river. Indirectly, however, they contribute to it very efficaciously by giving it a lake-like appearance, which in the slow rivers may extend for several miles. I remember an artist who declared that if he knew that water had been retained in any place artificially it would immediately cease to give him pleasure. I am not quite so difficult to please, and have often thought how much some of the prettiest scenes in nature owed to their reflection in the still waters of some well-filled river-bed, which, in its turn, was indebted for its fulness to an unseen mill-weir or lock-weir lower down. I confess, however, that there is always rather a shock of disillusion when we actually come to see the weir itself, the too prosaic cause of what seemed to be Nature's own most authentic poetry.

All the works mentioned hitherto sink into insignificance in comparison with the great dikes constructed to keep rivers from inundating plains. The classic land of dikes is, as we all know, Holland, and the effect of them that first strikes a stranger is that they completely conceal the surrounding country. It seemed to De Amicis, the first time he found himself between two dikes, that the boat was on a piratical expedition to take somebody by surprise. It was, in fact, situated like a body of soldiers advancing in a military ditch with no sight of anything but the sky. Afterwards the boat came amongst the islands of the Zealand archipelago, but there was a mystery about them which consisted in this, that the islands were not really seen, but only guessed at:—

'To right and left of the wide channel, before and behind the vessel, nothing was to be seen but the straight lines of the dikes, like a green streak on the level of the water, and behind this streak, here and there, were the tops of trees and church steeples, or red ridges of roofs that appeared to play hide and seek whilst we passed. Not a hill, not a mound of earth, not a house was discoverable anywhere, everything was hidden, everything seemed to be immersed in water; it seemed as if those islands were on the point of sinking completely, and one looked again and again to see if they were still visible. It seemed as if we were crossing some country on the day of the deluge, and it was a pleasure to think that we had a boat under us.'

This is the beautiful result of having large dikes, but in Holland the people have the consolation of knowing that they are useful and even indispensable for the protection of their green and fertile polders. In the lower Rhone the great dikes have not led to any such happy result. The desolation of the Camargue in the delta of the Rhone has been described in the last chapter. It is believed now, by M. Lenthéric* and others, that all the enormous labour spent upon the dikes of the Rhone below Arles has been much worse than thrown away, because they prevent the natural flooding of the plain of La Camargue, which would ultimately have converted it, by deposits, into much more fertile land. The inundations of the Rhone, when unrestricted by the engineers, were as beneficial as those of the Nile, and besides depriving the land of this benefit, their labours have exposed the inhabitants to a new peril, there being no inundation so dangerous as that from a breach suddenly made in an embankment. Such a torrent does not simply *cover* a tract of country, but devastates it. 'Au lieu d'une inondation lente, progressive et bienfaisante, c'est un véritable déluge qui balaye toute la plaine placée en contre-bas du fleuve et y produit des désordres effroyables.' The dikes entirely deprive the surrounding country of the fertilisation from the smaller floods, and add a fresh anxiety to the anxious life of the people during the great ones. Altogether, there are about two hundred miles of these dikes upon the Rhone.

The quays in towns are very gratifying to our love of neatness and convenience; they are a plain evidence of advanced civilisation, because no rude people would incur such labour simply for the sake of order; but it is surprising that the engineers who have planned the river quays should so very rarely have felt the touch of an architectural inspiration. The Thames Embankment is the only thing of the kind known to me which has risen above the line that separates engineering from architecture. It is a noble work. London has gained enough from it in dignity to compensate for any loss of picturesqueness. Three things only are wanting to the perfection of the Thames Embankment, and the absence of these is not the fault of the constructors. They

* M. Lenthéric is an *Ingénieur des Ponts et Chaussées*, who has written several works on the south of France, which combine, in the rarest degree, topographic and archaeological knowledge with literary accomplishment. I do not know any works of that class so well done as his *Villes Mortes du Golfe de Lyon*, his *La Grèce et l'Orient en Provence*, and *La Provence Maritime, Ancienne et Moderne*. These works are models of what topographic books ought to be, with their fulness of information, their sound style, and entire absence of pedantry. M. Lenthéric is not a traveller in the common sense of the word, but a close and thoughtful student of a region which is full of historical and scientific interest.

KIRKSTALL ABBEY

Water-colour Drawing by J. M. W. TURNER, R.A.

Reproduced in Photogravure by *BOUSSOD & VALADON*

The drawing of Kirkstall Abbey is a convenient illustration of human work on rivers in two ways; first, by the neighbourhood of the Abbey itself to the water, and, secondly, by the weir which makes the water smooth and ensures a reflection, at least when there is no wind. The drawing is also useful because it shows the value of water near a beautiful building, especially when the building is in ruins and has an expression of melancholy peacefulness which is greatly enhanced by the reflection. The tranquil water above the weir seems to represent the dead past, and the tumbling water below it the noise and movement of the present, a contrast likely to be felt at Kirkstall which is only too near Leeds.

could not make Thames water aqua-marine, like the Rhone at Geneva, nor emerald like the Gardon; they could not give the transparent atmosphere of the South, nor a lively crowd of happy people enjoying themselves under a bright sky, all of which would be most desirable adjuncts to an architectural river-side. Yet such as it is, with a foul river and a foggy atmosphere, the Thames Embankment is to the quays of the Seine what a lordly terrace is to a railway platform. River quays are so entirely destructive of the picturesque that they make some degree of magnificence a necessity. In Paris this is not given by the river-wall itself but by the edifices above it. The finest river-quays in the world in proportion to the size of the city are, I believe, those of Lyons, yet even there it is a mechanical perfection only, a perfection of straight lines, smooth walls, and broad walks planted with several rows of trees, a great improvement from the practical and orderly point of view on the confusion of the river-side during the middle ages, and a work that gives all of us a feeling of satisfaction, the satisfaction of the desire for cleanliness and civilisation, which has nothing to do with the fine arts either in their picturesque or severer aspects.

The builders of bridges have done more than any other engineers or architects for the spoiling or the improvement of certain particular places on rivers, though the works we have been considering extend for much longer distances. When it happens that a place is not merely a part of a river's length, but has a character of its own, the erection of a bridge may destroy that character so completely that the place becomes simply unrecognisable. On the other hand, there are many river-scenes whose beauty and interest have been greatly enhanced by the construction of a bridge, which serves as a kind of nexus, joining together many lines of a composition that Nature apparently intended to suggest, yet left for man to finish. Again, there may be much more unity in a bridge, which is a structure of definite length, than there can ever be in *chaussées* that may extend for miles and have no more necessary ending than a piece of telegraph wire. For these reasons, and on account of the fine opportunity for the exercise of invention and good taste in the proportions of the openings, it has always been considered that a bridge ought to be something more than a specimen of good practical engineering, and even when there is little ornament, little display of architectural pretensions, a bridge is rightly held to be a work of architectural art if, in addition to soundness of structure, it has that elegance or nobility of proportion which permanently satisfies the eye. Besides this satisfaction of our taste, a bridge may win a

powerful hold upon our affections. I never loved a quay or an embankment, but I have loved bridges; and if the reader happens to be troubled with the unreasonable and often painful capability of attaching himself to inanimate things, he is very likely to remember several bridges that he could not cross without emotion. Burns went so far as to personify two bridges and make them talk, which appeared so natural to other bards that many other bridges in Scotland found a voice.* This is worth mentioning as an evidence of imaginative human sympathy with these structures, and if other evidence were necessary it might be found in the French expression which has been current since the time of Henri IV., 'Je me porte comme le Pont Neuf,' attributing *health* to a bridge instead of simple stability.

The best contrast between 'twa brigs' that I remember as characteristic of mediaeval and modern times is to be seen at Pierre-Perthuis, on the Cure, not very far from Vézelay. The Cure belongs to the class of streams that I have named 'Canoe Rivers.' After passing at the base of the height crowned by the fine old castle of Chastellux, it flows rapidly on a rocky bed through rather a wild glen, and then comes to an eminence with a church upon it, a small village, and the remains of a feudal castle. There is an old steep road from the village down to the stream, which it crosses on a little Gothic bridge, very narrow and awkward, and rising high in the middle over its single arch with a turn in the road when you get across, altogether a bridge quite unfit for driving, but good enough for horsemen and pedestrians. Nevertheless, this ill-contrived bridge, with all the ups and downs before it, upon it, and after it, is as perfect a piece of bridge architecture as anything I ever met with on that scale; and as it has gained much in dignity by age we congratulate ourselves that the superior modern engineers have not thought it worth their while to remove it from the landscape. What they have done, however, has been to make the public road go straight from the eminence on which the village of Pierre-Perthuis is built to the top of the crag on the other side of the river, and to accomplish this they have erected an arch of what seems a perilous, and is certainly an amazing elevation, having its abutments in the rock on each side. I need hardly observe that the top of the new bridge is quite flat (according to modern preferences), so that people in carriages roll easily and un-

* One of these imitators of Burns is said to have informed his readers that,

'Once upon a day
Dumfries' twa brigs stood still and nought did say,'

a degree of taciturnity less exceptional with our bridges than our politicians.

consciously from one crag to the other, and only those who descend to the river's bed have any conception of the height at which the few stones in the middle are scientifically suspended in the air. It seems, however, that Pierre-Perthuis has not yet done with engineering enterprises, for there is now a great railway scheme involving the construction of a bridge that will dwarf the one just described as effectually as it dwarfed the mediaeval one. The railway bridge will first leap over the church steeple, and then clear the ravine in its own way, at what vertiginous height I cannot tell. When this is done, posterity will have the opportunity of comparing, at that little place on the Cure, three excellent examples of bridge-building in different stages, the first aiming only at getting across a stream, the second clearing a ravine, the third flying in the air like a bird over village, and steeple, and every inequality of ground. A few miles higher up the same river the castle of Chastellux is now approached by a viaduct that stretches across the glen. That is hardly a bridge over a stream, it is a bridge over a valley where a stream happens to flow, like the suspension-bridge at Fribourg.

A small one-arched bridge gains in poetical sublimity in proportion to the depth and danger of the ravine that is traversed by it, and if the bridge is itself apparently rather thin and slight about the keystone, with little or no parapet to give a seeming massiveness, the effect of sublimity is much enhanced. Turner's drawing of the Old Devil's Bridge is an excellent example. We see that the ravine is of great depth (of unknown depth in the drawing), that its sides are of hard rock, where a fall would not be broken by bushes, and that the bridge is not very massive. An artist like Turner has the keenest perception of everything that can influence a spectator, and it may not unreasonably be suspected that he made the arch thinner at the top than he saw it in the reality, as there is absolutely no weight whatever on the keystone. The more perilous a bridge appears to be—perilous to build, perilous to cross—the more it awakens in us those sympathetic fears for others which are poetical when suggested by the imagination. If we perceive that the bridge is narrow the effect is increased because passengers must be nearer the parapet. The old bridge at Avignon, of which a part only is left standing, gains in various ways by its narrowness, it is both more elegant and more evidently destined for passage only, not for idling or merchandising. Our present Westminster Bridge is so wide that we lose the sensation of crossing water, and it is obvious that if the width of a bridge were indefinitely increased we should have the impression simply of an area of ground, as on the artificial ground over the Canal de

St. Martin at Paris, which is really nothing but a bridge, though it does not in the least give the idea of one.

In connexion with this part of the subject I may tell the reader the story of a personal disappointment which illustrates in various ways the architectural and pictorial qualities of bridges. I had long desired to see the famous Pont St. Esprit on the Rhone, but it was at some distance from the old line of railway, and I had not at that time descended the river in a boat. By what seemed a strange accident (though the reason for it is intelligible now) I had never seen an engraving or even a photograph of the Pont St. Esprit, and so was left entirely to the devices of my own imagination which revealed the structure—

'compassed murkily about
With ravage of six long sad hundred years.'

All I knew about it was that it had been erected by a confraternity of monks called 'Les Frères Pontifes,' who were incorporated for the special purpose of constructing it in the middle of the thirteenth century; that these monks were extremely clever men in their way, and being churchmen contemporary with the best Gothic architects who ever lived, might be expected to have the architectural as well as the engineering faculties. As to the bridge itself I knew that it was three times as long as London Bridge,* that there were nineteen great arches and three smaller ones, and that the great arches varied much in span. I was also aware that they did not cross the Rhone in a straight line, but after 450 mètres went curving away to the south. A friend who had seen it many years ago told me that the roadway was extremely narrow, and I had romantic ideas of towers and a chapel ruined at the Revolution, but connected with the structure still in a vague, imaginative way; then there was the fact that the Rhone hurried through the old arches in a furious and dangerous manner, which heightened the poetry of the old bridge by proving its powers of resistance. From all these elements I composed a mental picture of the most delightful kind. The narrow old Pont St. Esprit went irregularly across a foaming width of water, its strong piers projecting boldly and crowned with refuges. The little old town adorned a rocky height with its crumbling towers, whence you could see the river with the wondrous old bridge wandering strangely to the distant opposite shore. One had but to add a fine pictorial

* In the *Géographie du Gard*, published by Hachette, M. Joanne gives the length of the Pont St. Esprit as 840 mètres. If this is correct the proportions in English feet would stand thus: London Bridge, 928 feet; Pont St. Esprit, 2755 feet.

THE OLD DEVIL'S BRIDGE

Sketch in Water-colour by J. M. W. TURNER, R.A.

Reproduced in Photogravure by *A. DAWSON*

The Devil's Bridge, as most readers remember, is in the Pass of St. Gothard. The old bridge was originally built in the twelfth century, and when compared with the new one, that looks much safer, it completely proves how much our feelings of the sublime are connected with apparent or possible danger. The narrowness of the bridge, its low parapet, and the height of it above the rocky bed of the Reuss, give it far more sublimity than that possessed by the obviously safe modern structure. Turner's drawing is really an illustration of man's work on rivers at its most interesting stage. Modern engineering has so completely overcome all obstacles, that the freshness of early triumph is lost to us.

effect of late evening, or moonlight, to make this fancy as poetical as any dream possibly could be.

In reality the Pont St. Esprit seems commonplace to our modern eyes. We are so accustomed to great railway viaducts that we have entirely lost the power of feeling astonished by a long succession of arches. The road on the bridge has been widened to suit modern requirements, and to effect this the whole structure has been cased with new stone on both sides, so that the work of the monks is hidden from our eyes, although the form preserved is still externally the same. The towered gates and the chapel have disappeared. For the safety of navigation the two arches next the town have been removed and replaced by a thing in cast-iron. This sounds like an abominable vandalism, yet the reality does not offend the eye, so prosaic are the monotonous stone arches beyond. The chief impression made by the real bridge is that the excellent road upon it is a great convenience for vehicles, especially for the omnibuses that go to the railway station at La Croisière.

It may be worth while to consider what are the faults that make the Pont St. Esprit a failure from the artistic point of view. It is so long that it has no *ensemble*, but straggles away to a sort of endlessness like an unfinishable discourse. It greatly wants projections to break the monotony of its lines. The variety in the size of the arches is good, but it is not so perceptible as in comparatively short bridges.

The Pont Neuf, at Paris, is the best river-bridge that I remember. It has everything that is lacking to the Pont St. Esprit. It is happily separated into two parts, with a very marked division in the middle, upon the island, where there is a sort of bastion with the equestrian statue of Henri IV. and a rich mass of trees. Each of the two halves is a complete structure in itself of reasonable length, and every pier is relieved by a semi-circular refuge that produces an effect not unlike that of a bartizan on a tower. These refuges were, in fact, formerly turrets that served afterwards for little shops; but when the shops were done away with, and the turrets reduced in height, the bases of them were still preserved as resting-places with stone seats. The value of them from an artist's point of view may be estimated by the importance given to them in Méryon's dry-point, and also by Turner's exaggeration of their size. I have observed elsewhere * that Turner made them three times as broad as they are in reality in proportion to the arches. This was only his way of expressing delight in them.

* See *Paris in Old and Present Times*, published by Seeley & Co.

The modern custom of removing the fortified gateways from mediaeval bridges is greatly to be regretted. Anything that rises well above the parapet is acceptable when not positively offensive in itself. Mediaeval fortifications were sometimes heavy and tasteless, but what they wanted in elegance they gained in grim sublimity; and every century of their age added to their dignity, and took them out of the category of things amenable to ordinary criticism. The desire for some erection of importance at each end of a bridge is not confined either to military works or mediaeval times. The ancient Romans sometimes satisfied this want by building triumphal arches when fortifications were not required. There is a charming instance of this in the bridge over the Touloubre, near the Étang de Berre, called the 'Pont Flavien,' a bridge of a single arch over a ravine, with a beautiful triumphal arch in Roman Corinthian at each end of it, the whole wonderfully well preserved, as it did not happen to be in a town, such things being rarely permitted to exist in the midst of modern civilisation. Amongst mediaeval fortified bridges I do not remember any existing example so good as that at Cahors over the Lot, commemorated in an etching by Mr. Ernest George. The piers have semicircular projections like the round towers that are half buried in a Roman city wall or a mediaeval castle, and three lofty towers, besides a gateway with a portcullis, stand upon the bridge itself, the passengers going under them through arches. It is possible that the builders may have thought about nothing but military defence, and yet they employed means which might have been suggested by an artist as better calculated than any others for breaking the monotony which is the common defect of bridges. The space between the towers (which are about the same height) gives a most desirable measure of length, and whenever the atmosphere is the least hazy the aërial perspective of the receding towers is a great addition to their grandeur. There is a modern bridge at Chalon-sur-Saône in which the desire for some similar result has induced the architect to build eight obelisks on his piers. Of course we all know what he wanted, and the attempt is praiseworthy; but unfortunately his obelisks are too meagre and taper too much to harmonise well with what is otherwise a very massive structure, and besides this a built obelisk always looks poor, and these are built. The architect should have given monoliths, or nothing.

There is a difficulty about elevated ornaments on classical bridges that was not felt in mediaeval ones on account of the readiness with which mediaeval architecture crowned itself with turrets and towers. For some reason that we have not leisure to inquire into at present

the classical spirit did not take much delight in these ornaments, an indifference not arising from ignorance, as they were known to classic architects, but from a certain severity in taste. Even at the present day it is hard to suggest any satisfactory way of breaking the line of a classical bridge, except by placing groups of sculpture upon it, and this is too costly an expedient for any places less wealthy than great cities, or for any persons less disposed to make sacrifices for beauty than the owners of great gardens and parks. Again, if the bridge is classical, the architect will not be so tolerant of imperfection in sculpture as a mediaeval architect would have been, so that if it is employed at all it must be the sculpture of artists and not of simple carvers. The places suitable for its employment are either the tops of piers (where the groups happily interrupt the continuous line of the parapet) or on the piers between the arches, when what would else have been a large blank space of wall is filled with advantage as in the Pont d'Iena at Paris, or groups of sculpture may be placed on pedestals at each entrance, which has been done for the same bridge. The sphinxes at each entrance to the Britannia tubular railway bridge over the Menai Straits are a good example of the employment of sculpture; indeed the whole of that bridge is admirable as a work of art, though the art is very simple and severe. The long line of tube (which looks like a great beam) is fortunately broken by the piers of marble which are finished above the beam as towers, and the majesty that naturally belongs to a work of colossal size and weight is enhanced by the prudent use of some architectural adornment. The tubular bridge over the river Conway, near the castle, is less fortunate because the neighbourhood of a great mediaeval building led the architect of the bridge to adopt a castellated style for the entrances to the tubes, a style which might be more or less in harmony with the fortress, but would scarcely, in any other situation, have been chosen to accompany a bridge that was nothing but two parallel beams.

One of the most astonishing instances of a complete change of opinion in the civilised world is our entire abandonment of the mediaeval notion that a bridge ought to be covered with houses. A result of that custom was to block the river-views in cities, so that when there were several bridges (as in Paris from the island) the river was divided into several oblong places, differing from ordinary squares in having a watery and moving floor. Every one who appreciates a view and who feels imprisoned in a street knows what an immense relief it is to come upon the quays of the Seine or the bridges across the Thames. It was not always so. The great cities of the Middle Ages were smaller than

our great cities, but they were not so open, and the feeling of confinement must have been greater in those times. Not only did the bridge-houses block the view from other places, but they converted the bridge itself into a street, and a narrow street, not unlike the modern covered 'passages.' Where we see the finest city-views in the world, our forefathers looked into little shops. In the really picturesque mediaeval times, or in the time of the picturesque and pleasantly barbarous Renaissance, the erections on bridges were often sufficiently interesting in themselves to compensate for the obstruction that they caused. It is impossible to imagine anything more perfectly picturesque than Old London Bridge towards the close of the sixteenth century, when Nonesuch House and St. Thomas à Beckett's Chapel existed still, and the mill-wheels, and the Traitors' Gate, and there were picturesque projections between the narrow pointed arches, and the descending tide rushed through them like the cataracts of the Nile. Was ever a Lord Mayor's extravagance so excusable as the pretty Nonesuch House, with its balcony and arcade, and mullioned windows and carvings, and its five gay turrets against the sky? In those times people do not seem to have taken bridge-building quite seriously; they were not careful to diminish as much as might be the rush of the current under the arches, and it is perfectly certain that with their very considerable architectural skill they could have given their arches a much greater span, yet they were contented with bridges that were strong, indeed, but obstructive; and although the thing itself was only half satisfactory, they proceeded to give it an adventitious or parasitic beauty by putting other things upon it that were quite unconnected with its uses. There is a childishness or a boyishness in this which is quite foreign to the serious modern spirit of utility. For us the best bridge is not that which has the prettiest edifices upon it, but that which gives the largest and easiest transit with the least possible obstruction of the river. This need not prevent us, if we were a little less prosaic, from taking advantage of an islet here and there for making the pier larger than the others, and employing it as a site for a chapel like those on the old bridges of Wakefield and Avignon. The chapel at Wakefield is by far the richer and prettier of the two, and I cannot imagine any more delightful relief to the utilitarian architecture of a bridge than an ecclesiastical edifice of small dimensions and rich or elegant design. Bridge-chapels are, however, entirely foreign to modern habits. We cross rivers in a hurry, and should not make any use of the chapel unless there were public services, when we should complain that it was inconveniently small.

A kind of bridge in the most perfect harmony with modern requirements is the suspension-bridge, and it fortunately so happens that bridges of this class contain in their own utilitarian necessities such obvious suggestions of beauty that the least aesthetic of architects can scarcely fail to take the hint. The piers have to be continued high above the roadway to support the ropes or chains, and they may answer aesthetically to the towers on the fortified mediaeval bridges, or to the triumphal arches at the entrances to such a Roman structure as the 'Pont Flavien.' The chains fall naturally in festoons of the most lovely curvature, and the rods that hang from them to support the roadway give perspective effects of the prettiest intricacy. The roadway itself is not a straight line, but is slightly arched. The almost inevitable beauty of a suspension-bridge is so great that it is not easily spoiled, yet this may sometimes be accomplished by bad architecture in the piers, as in the unfortunate central pier at Trévoux, where an engineer with architectural proclivities indulged in some wonderful Gothic of his own, made all the more obtrusively visible by a trenchant difference of colour between brick masonry and stone facings.

It often happens in the construction of suspension-bridges that a pier is erected on some islet in the river, dividing the structure into two parts, and as the islet is seldom precisely in mid-stream the parts are almost sure to be unequal, which is favourable to beauty by giving different curves to the ropes or chains. A central pier is a stately object in a river, being seen with its reflection from both shores.

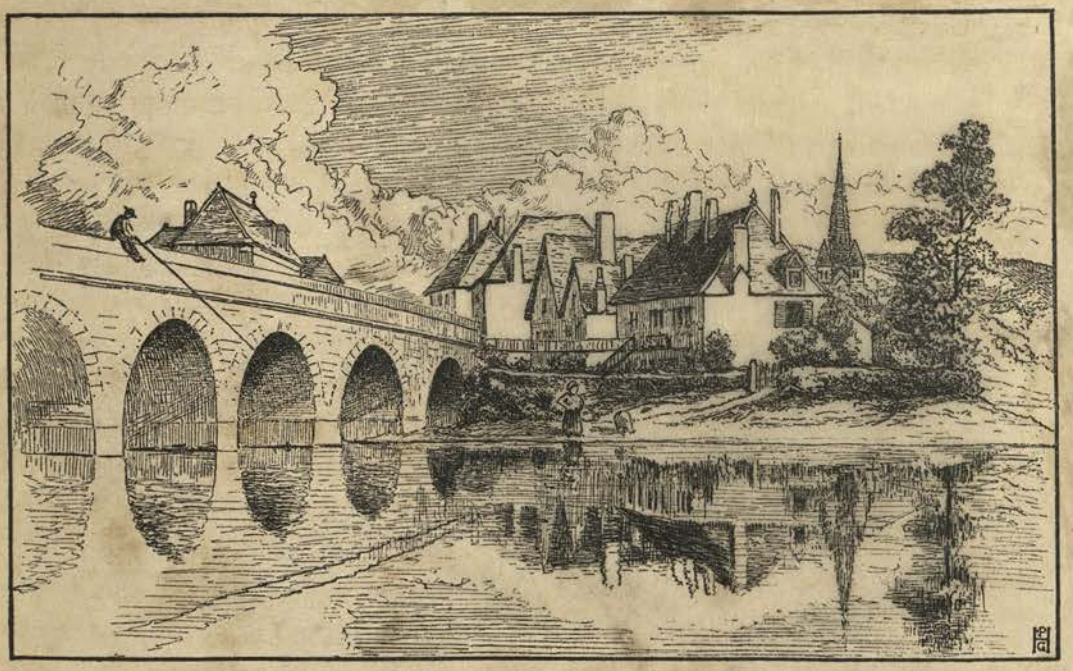
The enormous span attainable by suspending a road in the air is in itself a great element of sublimity. In most cases, when the imagination of poets has been free to create bridges according to their own sense of the sublime, they have insisted upon greatness of span. The other most powerful element of sublimity is height, and here, too, suspension-bridges have greater possibilities, as they may be hung across ravines from points higher than the loftiest piers. Both superiorities are proved in their perfection at Fribourg, where the lower of the two bridges has a clear span of more than nine hundred feet, and the shorter bridge, that over the Gotteron ravine, is three hundred and eighteen feet high, more than twice the height of the Menai bridge in Wales. I need hardly observe that ravine-bridges of this kind are so far above the rivers or brooks in the ravines as to lose all connexion with them. At Fribourg, the old covered bridge over the Saarine is still the real Saarine bridge. It is (or was when I saw it) a sort of wooden trough roofed over and supported on one low stone pier.

Even the ordinary suspension-bridges over the French rivers are lifted so much above the level of the water as to be very independent of its troubles. The great floods touch nothing but one or two stone piers and the abutments, flowing freely and harmlessly under the roadway. The ice-floes pass untouched in endless succession. I only remember one suspension-bridge near enough to the water to be carried away by a flood. It was not upon a river reputed to be navigable. A spate rose a yard too high and demolished it, but even the spate could not clear away the wreckage which I came upon afterwards in a canoe, the most dangerous entanglement of twisted wire imaginable, going quite across the stream, and arranged, as if purposely, to catch one as a rabbit is caught in a snare.

There is nothing finer in the existence of an old stone bridge than its steady opposition to descending ice. Many such bridges have sharp ice-cutters, iron-bound, and the floes come against them only to be broken or turned aside one after another, a spectacle of ceaseless interest to muffled watchers gazing over the parapet. The slightness of structure in suspension-bridges makes them gain or lose very little from effect; indeed, one hardly thinks of effect in connexion with them, but massive stone arches gain wonderfully in expression from effects of brightness or gloom. There is nothing more awful in river scenery than the gloom of a great old bridge at night, with enough light to make out the shapes of the arches, but not enough to reveal what is under them, when the gas-lamps, by reflection, show a few swirls on the Stygian current. There are two very short lines in *The Bridge of Sighs* which prove clearly that Hood had observed this effect like a painter:—

'The bleak wind of March
Made her tremble and shiver,
But not the dark arch,
Or the black flowing river:
Mad from life's history,
Glad to death's mystery,
Swift to be hurl'd—
Anywhere, anywhere
Out of the world!'

The Port of Blanzy at Chalon-sur-Saône. *A drawing given to show the value of artificial things in lending an extraneous interest to a place that is naturally dull. Nearly everything in the sketch is of Man's making. Even the trees were planted intentionally for a promenade.*



The Bridge of St. Andoche at Autun. *This sketch is given for the same purpose as the one above it, nearly everything visible being human work, although the subject would be still called a 'landscape.' The natural materials would be simply a straight line of shore with a range of hills beyond. The hills are just visible to the right.*

CHAPTER XXXI.

Rivers in Art.

RIVER scenery, as it concerns artists, divides itself into two categories. It is either pure nature or it is connected with human labour, often so closely connected that the only natural thing to be seen is the water, the banks being entirely hidden by engineering work or by houses, and the water itself does little else than reflect these artificial things.

Before going farther into the matter I may do well to prevent misconception by stating briefly the argument about the natural and the artificial in painting, so far as it affects the subject of the present chapter.

There is an old prejudice against all natural landscapes, considered as subjects for painting, when they do not include evidences of man's presence. It has sometimes been plainly asserted that although pure nature may supply good material for studies, a work of real art cannot be made from it, and that such a work requires what is called 'human interest' in the subject, by which cottages, houses, churches, vessels, or merchandise, are commonly understood.

The answer to this prejudice, or theory, is that there must always be some human interest even in a painting that represents the most perfect solitude, because there is always the sentiment of the painter, which is human sentiment, and of a superior kind. We maintain that the presence of a piece of mason's work, for instance, amongst the materials of a picture, cannot in itself do much to elevate the performance to the higher grade of artistic production, since the masonry itself may have been executed in a purely utilitarian spirit. On the other hand, we should say that if a tree or an animal, which is a natural object, were painted in such a way as to exhibit the artistic feeling of the artist, the result would be a work of art, because it would show the presence of that particular human element which is the *raison d'être* of a picture.

It will be seen from this that we do not at all deny the necessity for a human element in art, but that instead of placing it in the thing represented, we place it, as we believe more justly, in the human feeling which animates the interpretation of nature.

We go even a little farther in the same direction, by preferring as material for painting, either pure nature or else artificial things which are not in themselves works of any elevated art, in order that they may owe their artistic value almost entirely to the genius of the painter who arranges and modifies whilst he represents them. We think, for example, that the west front of a great cathedral, like that at Amiens, is not so good a subject for a picture as a few cottages that a painter is free to deal with as he pleases. The cathedral is a work of art, of architectural art, already, and a picture of it can be little more than a repetition of the architect's ideas, but the sort of material that painters generally prefer leaves them free to express ideas of their own, if they have any.

The opinions which have just been expressed are quite modern. So far as we are able to judge by their works, all painters who flourished before the second half of the nineteenth century believed that it was necessary to the interest of their pictures that the works of men should be generally, if not invariably, introduced amongst the objects represented. There may have been a few exceptions. Ruysdael, for example, did not care about the products of human industry so much as other old masters, but the rule is as I have just stated it.

Nobody seems to have been more thoroughly persuaded than Turner of the advantages of the old theory in this respect, and the reader may perhaps feel interested in examining his *Rivers of France*, with especial reference to this part of the subject. The impression left with me after such an examination is that the rivers themselves were secondary, in his estimate, to the buildings upon their banks. I find hardly any attempt to give the character of the great French rivers at a distance from cities. The artist does not seem to be familiar with the lonely places on such rivers—I have said 'places,' but that is a very inadequate and misleading word; what I mean is rather those leagues and leagues of solitude during which a great river traverses wide tracts of country, often of a character profoundly impressive, or felt to be so, by those who are alive to the influences of Nature. Even men who have no special landscape gift, and hardly any tendency to dreamy melancholy, are impressed by scenes of this kind when they pass through them in a boat. The reader may remember a book by Mr. Molloy, entitled *Our Autumn Holiday on French Rivers*, a book that was only intended to be witty and amusing, but it told the story of real experiences, and therefore amongst the light-hearted tales of aquatic travel we meet with a little description here and there by Mr. Molloy, or a sketch by Mr. Linley Sambourne, which, in a quite unpretending manner, really conveys the influence of the river itself in its

long and lonely wanderings. Here, for example, is an excellent little description of the Loire after it leaves Orleans :—

'It is difficult to conceive anything more desolate than this part of the Loire. No interest from the surrounding country, which had a dreary look and was almost monotonous. A few black hills were all we saw for five miles, except sand and water. Then came two or three houses at Saint-Ay, where the holy recluse of that name built himself a hermitage to be far away from the world. He couldn't have chosen better on the banks of the Nile. Then on again through the vast waste of sand, a desert that seemed never ending.'

The travellers stop at a little town called Meung, twelve miles below Orleans, and then continue their voyage. In popular drawings there are invariably groups of boats, but the following is nearer to nature :—

'Leaving the town, the river resumed its wild, black* aspect, and the navigation of the sand islands became intricate. We had no means of ascertaining the channel, and there was no one to ask. Once, and once only, we sighted a barge, which seemed to have no occupation, but was embedded in sand. Two men on board.'

Another short description very effectively conveys the impression that is given by the broadest reaches of the Loire. When such river views are broad and long at the same time, so as to give very remote distances, it is surprising what an effect of vastness they produce—an effect far surpassing that of a lake equally extensive, as we know that the river has no end except in the distant sea :—

'Then far ahead, in a haze of sunset, rose up the indistinct outline of Blois.'

'It was at such times we realised how grand was the Loire—the river of ancient cities. Beautiful as the Seine was—in many respects far more so than the Loire—it fell far short of the latter in expanse. Here was something of the breadth and distance of the sea. I feel the difficulty, the impossibility even, of describing the effect it produced on us.'

These little bits of description, written without any intention of displaying artistic cleverness, but simply as rough notes from nature, have the great quality of such notes in recalling instantly the kind of scenery referred to. Even if the reader is not acquainted with river-solitudes of that kind he may imagine them, and if he knows them well in nature he will remember them very vividly.†

It is an aspect of river scenery that Turner hardly ever noticed. I cannot at this moment recall to mind a single drawing by him which

* It seems not unlikely that this word 'black' may be a misprint for *bleak*.

† In describing a long and broad reach of the Seine where the boat got water-logged and upset, Mr. Molloy says, 'A quarter of a mile to shore, and a sea that few swimmers would have cared to tempt in laced boots. *Not a house or living being to be seen, not even a wild goat.*'

had for its purpose to remind us of the dreary solitude of a great river at a distance from men and cities. Neither does he seem to have cared for the special physical characteristics of such a river as the Loire. He did not draw one of its sand-banks, did not preserve any record of that which so particularly characterises the Loire, a number of divided currents working their impetuous way amongst islets of shifting pebbles. I do not remember any evidence that Turner had cared to study the banks of the Loire when it flows through quiet pastures and the earth is undermined, and the sods fold over and fall. He seems to have been indifferent to everything that was familiar and quietly characteristic in the life of the river, seeking only the cities, castles, precipices, and not being willing to accept even these as they were, but giving them fictitious elevation.

I have often regretted that Turner's attention had not been directed to the Rhone, which he never illustrated, instead of the Loire, which he illustrated so partially, as a lover of high banks and buildings in romantic situations would have found much to his taste upon the Rhone. To express the difference in a very brief and abstract manner, I should say that the horizontal line is dominant upon the Loire and the vertical upon the Rhone. Those parts of the Loire which would have best suited Turner's genius for sublimity (so far as pure landscape is concerned) are not included in his *Rivers of France*, and were never visited by him.

The use that Turner made of artificial materials in his views of the Loire and the Seine preceded the same taste in modern etchers, but it is more remarkable in Turner's case, because he sketched in water-colour, which deals with distant landscape as effectively as with artificial things in foregrounds, whereas etching is naturally better adapted for picturesque foreground materials, and besides this difference in the technical convenience of the two arts, the remarkable ability of Turner in dealing with large surfaces of water and sky made him personally more independent of artificial furniture than an inferior artist would have been.

Here is a brief analysis of the drawings in the *Rivers of France*, which may be interesting as a proof of the remarkable predominance of human interest over pure landscape. There are sixty-one subjects altogether.* There is not one of them without buildings, but there are six without water. Of the remaining fifty-five, twenty-nine include views of bridges, and there are sometimes two bridges in one drawing. The other

* The engraving of 'St. Germain en Laye' (R. Wallis) is not included in my copy of the *Rivers of France*. In that plate the materials are remarkably artificial. There is a bridge and a small town, and the river-bank is faced with a great mass of masonry, including about forty arches, tier above tier. The foreground is crowded with figures. There is one tree, but the lower branches have been lopped.

LE BAS MEUDON ON THE SEINE

Original Etching by MAXIME LALANNE

This brilliant etching by M. Lalanne, which contains the result of a long experience and intimate knowledge of such subjects, expressed with great simplicity and directness, is a curious illustration of the same preference for man's work on rivers which so strongly characterised Turner. Almost all the life and interest of the plate are due to human works and occupations, to the boats and houses that men have built, and to their employment in navigating or discharging. To one who is familiar with French rivers, this apparently slight aud rapidly executed etching conveys the full impression of their livelier places. By the help of a little memory and imagination, the whole bright scene comes back to us with its light and colour, even to the tricolor on the flag-staff.

Bords de la Seine. M. Latanne 1884.

drawings include castles, churches, or monasteries, and towns such as Honfleur and Havre.

It is evident that Turner had a keen appreciation of the picturesque old French towns, and that it was these rather than the rivers which attracted him. The rivers were useful to reflect the towns and give a reason for the bridges, and they made a good connecting link between towns and castles, as the Moselle and the Loire have done since for Mr. Ernest George. A few of Turner's drawings, which show a length of river as seen from a height, are remarkable for the unapproachable skill with which he treated subjects verging on the panorama, and for his exquisite sense of river-beauty when the view was extensive enough to exhibit the great curves. The finest examples are the 'Caudebec,' the extensive view from above the Château de Tankarville, the distant view of Rouen, and the Château Gaillard. The Caudebec, besides showing beautiful river curves, is a striking example of a contrast which happens frequently in French rivers when you have a steep coteau on one bank and a wide plain on the other.

The beauty of towns is a subject that does not belong to this chapter, but it will not be out of place to give a paragraph on their relation to rivers, as connected with pictorial art.

The history of a river-town is simple. Its origin is always to be found in early river-navigation, which established small halting-places or ports at or near some fishing-station or place of primitive commerce. It appears to be ascertained that this early river-navigation was in great part carried on in coracles and on light rafts supported by inflated skins of animals, such as are used in Asia at the present day. Even in times when a rapid stream could not be ascended, it would be easy to make the downward voyage, so that from the first a river would have a great attraction in an age when there were no artificial roads. But there is evidence that a regular system of fluvial navigation existed in times more remote than we are accustomed to imagine. It is now quite accepted by archaeologists that there was an organised association of river boatmen on the Seine at a time that preceded the Roman invasion, though how much earlier cannot be positively ascertained.* These companies would

* 'Le territoire des Parisii baigné par la Seine, la Marne et l'Oise, cours d'eau tous navigables, possédait aussi une riche association de commerçants par eau, nommés NAUTAE PARISIACI. L'activité qu'elle donnait au commerce devait être antérieure à la conquête romaine; César la trouva sans doute pleinement organisée, puisque Strabon, son contemporain, parle des nombreux produits transportés du midi des Gaules tant par les fleuves que par les routes. Les cinquante bateaux dont s'empara Labienus pour faire descendre son armée sur la Seine, depuis Melodunum (Melun) jusqu'à Lutèce, afin de se rendre maître de cette ville, devaient appartenir aux *Nautae*.'—ALBERT LENOIR in *'Paris à travers les Ages.*

exist on other great rivers and have their regular stations where the Romans, or Gallo-Romans, would establish buildings of a substantial kind which might have lasted till our own day had they not been replaced by mediaeval cities, and these in their turn have been invaded by the Renaissance and by the most recent modernism. Turner saw the old towns at a happy time, when much of the old work remained and the newer was less formal than it is now. He could draw the modern houses almost as contentedly as the old ones, and over a general confusion of architectures and ages he could cast the glamour of an art that revealed things very partially, without any unpleasant insistence on the commonplace.

A town may have been first established on one side of a river, but as it extends along the shore there is always a tendency to build on the other side also. This has led to the existence of pairs of towns, such as Beaucaire and Tarascon, Tournon and Tain, Andance and Andancette. When both towns go by the same name they have still their own churches giving a sort of symmetry to the view, and if they are beautiful the effect is that of a pair of ornaments clasped across the river by a bridge.

It is wonderful that so confused and accidental a creation as a town can ever be beautiful or have any artistic unity, and yet there are towns that suggest compositions by the accidental arrangement of their houses and churches, just as the purely accidental movements of children or dogs playing together will often suggest figure compositions. In both cases pure accident gives the idea, and yet genius itself could not invent so happily without the suggestion from the accident. Turner went to Blois, Amboise, Angers, for the suggestion only. His way of treating a town was to observe some of the leading features, especially the towers, and then to place them very much as he liked best. He generally made them higher than in nature, but sometimes diminished them; however, so far as I know, he kept their character and then put crowded houses between in a delightfully confused way that gives the idea of *uncountable* houses much better than the clearness of a photograph. He liked the heaviness of the big houses on the quays, with their large roofs and dormer-windows, and he treated them with a certain laxity of drawing and a crumbling touch that quite express a degree of rudeness about them which is far preferable to the finished neatness of the new Haussmann style.

Since Turner's day our interest in rivers has extended over their entire course. We have become familiar with their loneliest reaches, a familiarity that we owe in great measure to the increased love of boating

ST. DENIS

Drawn by J. M. W. TURNER, R.A.

Engraved in Mezzotint by *A. BRUNET DEBAINES*

This subject was engraved by Fisher for the Rivers of France, *where it looks clearer, harder, and more definite; a difference partly owing to the kind of engraving employed, partly to the personal feeling of the engraver, and partly to alterations probably made by Turner on Fisher's proofs. M. Brunet-Debaines has endeavoured to approach the tone and character of the original drawing. The composition illustrates in a remarkable manner Turner's excessive liking for human interest in his landscapes. He has made the bit of river-shore as populous as possible, somewhat to the detriment of the broadly tranquil motive of the composition. The subject is one that would have suited Girtin, but Girtin would have given us the bare margin of the river in all its simplicity. He might, perhaps, have introduced the ferry-boat and the man and boy waiting to be taken across.*

and to a taste for being out at all hours with a tent for refuge in case of rain, or perhaps a house-boat moored in different parts of a stream. These healthy tastes have revealed a new world of beauty and interest, the more convenient for us that instead of being in some distant region it lies within the confines of the old countries.

There are two distinct ways of studying a river, answering to the two well-known ways of studying nature on land. The artist-traveller may take rapid memoranda, and be constantly moving from place to place in search of new impressions, or he may follow the example of a most able painter of river scenery, Mr. Keeley Halswelle, and become the proprietor of a house-boat, which allows him to change the place of his residence without changing the residence itself, giving him all the convenience of a home even in the solitudes of the great rivers. This may be done in a more fashionable form by having a steam-yacht large enough to afford accommodation, and I know an instance of a wealthy Frenchman who has such a vessel, not for speed, but simply for change of place. He fastens his ship close to some pretty river island, and remains there for weeks together, a kind of life most favourable to landscape painting, if he were a painter. The island serves as a kind of wild garden for his children.*

The painter who first used a house-boat was probably Daubigny, but he did not belong to the age of luxury, and was contented with a rude aquatic dwelling, a little hut built in a common heavy rowing-boat, which was celebrated in its day upon the Seine. It was provided with all that was really necessary for an artist who painted from nature, and all that a man of very simple tastes required for summer life upon the river, but it was too confined. He commemorated it in a series of sketch-etchings, which curiously demonstrated how much artistic merit of various kinds might coexist with perfectly formless drawing. Daubigny never was a draughtsman; he saw nature as a painter only, and as a painter in a country where the utmost discipline about drawing in figure pictures coexisted with the most complete neglect of it in landscape. But, on the other hand, if he did not draw, he certainly found the means of communicating in a broad and blunt way the impressions of a man who really loved nature. Turner drew rivers in the towns, or where the romance of them was heightened by some feudal castle; Daubigny painted them in the country, not seeking for sublimity, but contented

* Another rich Frenchman has developed nomadic luxury to the utmost by having ample lodging in one boat and a steam-engine in another, which is always in attendance to draw the dwelling from place to place.

to enjoy rural calm and peace, and to float quietly in his slow and cheap little yacht, the *Botin*. The tempers of the two men were as different as could be imagined. Turner, who was nearly destitute of simple rural feeling, almost invariably, when free to choose, sought the poetry of tower and town, and on rivers liked nothing so much as a bridge of many arches; Daubigny, loving the country, and not caring for any romantic excitement, had much the same happy attachment for the rural parts of the Seine and the Marne that our own Constable had for Suffolk. The Englishman painted the romantic human interest of the French rivers, and the Frenchman painted their peace, taking them simply as a part of rural France, but there is still room for some artist in the future who may paint the rivers themselves with a full sense of the grandeur of their noblest reaches, their farthest horizons, and under the effects that most powerfully enhance the impression upon the mind. There are occasional signs already of a tendency towards a larger understanding of river scenery. The quiet and elegant beauty of the Marne has never, I think, in the lonely parts of it, been interpreted so happily as by Edmond Yon.* The Rhone above Lyons has been etched and painted by Appian with much poetical feeling, and Lalanne has often etched places on the Seine and the Marne, generally with much life and spirit, and a keen sense of the picturesque in human work, both afloat and ashore. The tendency, however, of French landscape-painters is as much towards simplicity of subject as that of Turner was towards complexity, so that Frenchmen have the habit—a prudent habit—of painting 'little bits,' and of treating even a large river-subject as if it were a 'little bit' transferred to a bigger canvas. I remember an extreme instance of this simplicity in a picture by Corot very beautifully etched by Brunet-Debaines, which represented two cottages, themselves of the simplest form, two trees, and a bit of the most commonplace river-side. This contentment with the commonplace has prevented French artists from attempting to deal with the grandest scenes on their own rivers. They care more about pleasant relations of tone, which can be seen anywhere under a favourable effect, than about grandeur of scale and line. From their professional point of view they seem to be right, as the public likes the commonplace in subject provided that it is treated with accomplished technical skill.†

* I am thinking especially of his picture in the Salon of 1879, called 'Le Bas de Montigny.' It was admirably etched by the painter, and the etching may be found in *l'Art*, vol. xvii., p. 188.

† This reminds me of a footnote to the new separate handy edition of the second volume of *Modern Painters*. Mr. Ruskin says:—'I had not seen at this time, and could not have

BANKS OF THE SEINE

Painted by CHARLES DAUBIGNY

Reproduced in Photogravure by *DUJARDIN*

The motive of this picture, as the reader will at once perceive, is simply the rural tranquillity of the Seine at a distance from Paris. There is nothing to tell us even that the river is navigable. Here we are on a grassy bank, where a few women are washing linen; but they alone display any kind of activity. The horse is out of the shafts and doing nothing, the river glides quietly past its wooded shores, and nobody knows how far we may be from tower, or town, or bridge. After a while the well-rinsed linen will all be put in the cart, and the women will trudge home, and then the place will be as lonely as it was in the days of the Merovingian kings.

There is not space in such a chapter as this even to attempt to do anything like justice to the skill with which many landscape-painters have expressed their affection for inferior streams. There are many reasons why artists should like them. They afford opportunities for the study of transparency, for the study of objects seen through a coloured medium (water is never colourless) and passing away by swift gradation from clear visibility in the shallow parts to complete obscurity in the depths. The lively motion of water in swirls and eddies is a difficult but most attractive study, and the erosion of banks shows the stratification of rocks in places where it could otherwise be studied only in quarries where they have been violently blasted, and not gradually worn through. Besides this, as I have observed elsewhere, Nature always decorates her rocks on a river-side with vegetation, so that a painter finds much there to his taste, and as men seldom interfere with rivers that are not navigable there is a wildness about them which is beyond all expression refreshing in a very civilised and cultivated country. The difference between a brook's free run of a dozen or twenty miles between shores of its own all in thickets of oak, ash, alder, and birch, and the Loire in that part of its course where a dike faced with masonry runs parallel with it for a hundred miles, is much in favour of the wilder and smaller stream. The greatest objection to brook scenes is that unless the artist is very careful in his selection he is likely to paint something without a distance, as scenes of this class are usually very much enclosed. Yet this defect, which makes them often insufficient for pictures, is a strong recommendation when the purpose is only study. Every subject that is selected for prolonged study from nature must be a foreground subject.

Although river scenes, which are river scenes and nothing else, may often be beautiful and interesting to the artist, they are so much composed of the same elements as to leave a not very definite impression upon the mind. We have a general feeling of gratitude to the artists who have so often recalled the beauty of nature to our memories, but we do not long remember this or that river scene individually, unless it is associated with some definite object of Man's making, such as the Castle of Heidelberg, or the great tower at Beaugency. At this moment I remember in a general way the pleasure derived from pictures of English

conceived, the darkness and distortion of the vicious French schools of landscape.' The words 'darkness and distortion' are justly applicable to many French landscapes, but certainly not to all. There are French landscape-painters (I may mention Louis Auguin as an example) who study pale and luminous tones with great success. Others (like Victor Binet) work in a lower key, but are still as far both from darkness and from distortion as honest, open-air study can carry them. Both these men are incomparably better draughtsmen than Daubigny.

streams by Mr. Leader and other painters of less note, and in some cases I clearly remember the pictures themselves, but not their titles, which indeed are usually without special significance. There are thousands of pictures in the world expressing the love of natural river beauty, many of them displaying great knowledge and much manipulative skill, but very few have any individual celebrity. The possible combinations of rocks, trees, and running water, are infinite, they will continue to be painted as long as landscape art exists, and there is no reason why they should not be painted, but criticism will have little to say except that the works are good or inferior in their kind.

The exception to this rule is when the natural scene is of a very extraordinary kind, as in some great waterfall or river scene, remarkable, if not for the water, at least for its surroundings. We remember easily the large picture of the Falls of Niagara by Mr. Church, a work evidently full of the most observant study, but the study and observation would have left an evanescent impression if the natural scene had been less wonderful. There are probably other pictures by Mr. Church himself, not less truthful in their record of all that a weight of green water may produce in the way of mist in the air and disturbance in the pool below, that are remembered only by their possessors. A great waterfall is not often selected as a subject for painting, and yet if the fall has a celebrity of its own, it may communicate something of that celebrity to the picture, when a painted study of equal skill and truth, representing an obscure scene on an unknown part of the same river, would remain as little famous as the scene that it represented. But in spite of the success of Mr. Church, which appears unquestionable, the truth is that waterfalls, however interesting as studies, are not good subjects for pictures. Like all natural curiosities, they attract attention too much to themselves, so that the rest of the landscape, however beautiful, is inevitably accessory; and it is extremely difficult to paint them well, as they contain three elements that are three perpetual embarrassments—transparence, mist, and arrested motion. Besides this, a waterfall inevitably closes the view. I should say, then, that, like some other things in nature, waterfalls lie almost outside of pictorial art. Poets may describe them if they like. There is something very suggestive of poetical ideas in a waterfall, like two or three in Switzerland, that leaps into the air from a height sufficient to pulverise the water into mist, wetting the rocks to right or left, according to the direction of the wind, and, after keeping the mosses green by a gentle, perpetual irrigation, collecting itself again into flowing water that issues in a peaceful stream below.

Since the modern revival of etching river scenery has supplied

excellent subjects for study from nature in that art. There seems, indeed, to be a peculiar affinity between etchers and rivers, an affinity that may be explained by the readiness with which etching expresses both the natural picturesque which is everywhere abundant on unspoiled river-shores, and the artificial picturesque which is almost invariably found by river-side towns. Of river-side etchers Mr. Haden is the most complete, because he takes an equal interest in the natural and the artificial picturesque. For the thorough understanding of river banks and for the power of making the commonplace in banks interesting by superior keenness of observation, Mr. Haden is without a rival. His strong and original way of summarising foliage and of expressing the growth of stems and branches has been of inestimable value on the upper Thames, whilst his interest in boats and in the accidental accumulations of objects about landing-places has been equally useful down the river. In America Mr. Stephen Parrish has etched many plates of river scenery on the upper Delaware, the Schroon, and other streams, plates which are executed in an easy, straightforward manner, and have the power of making us feel as if we were travelling amongst the scenes themselves. We never feel that in the presence of elaborately artificial compositions.

CHAPTER XXXII.

Trees in Nature.

THE inhabitants of Great Britain may be divided into three classes with respect to their knowledge of trees. Some of them have never seen any trees at all; others have only seen British trees, and others have seen what trees may come to be in the foreign climates that are most favourable to their growth.

The British people who never saw any trees at all are, I believe, almost entirely confined to the western islands, though it may happen that there are dwellers in waste places in the north of Scotland who have never seen anything that an Englishman would call a tree. There are also many places in north Britain where trees, without being absolutely unknown, are so rare that they have no more appreciable effect on the scenery of the country than they have in Iceland. A few isolated and unhappy trees, belonging to three or four very hardy species, can give no conception of the luxuriance of southern woods.

To appreciate the value of trees in natural landscape it is necessary to have some personal experience of treeless wastes. This is easily within our reach on English moors and on many parts of the coast, but the experience is perhaps hardly complete, because we have the recollection of more cheerful scenery that lies at no very great distance, and to which we may soon return. To have the *complete* feeling of desolation in landscape from which sylvan beauty is excluded, we need, perhaps, to feel ourselves at a distance from anything less dreary, and for this there is nothing more suitable than a barren island in the barren sea.

Human life goes on cheerfully in any place where health is possible, so that there is nothing to prevent the population of a treeless country from being happy in their own way if the air is good, the water pure, and food readily procurable. Nevertheless, it has always been the custom of the poets when they described a landscape intended to be pre-eminently agreeable, to tell us that trees grew there luxuriantly. I cannot think of a single exception to this rule. The poets of classical antiquity had not our modern notion of natural landscape as a series of pictures, and they were not aware that a sentimental association could be established between melancholy afterglows and the sorrows of the human heart, yet they mentioned trees

ROUEN FROM THE COUNTRY

Original Etching by MAXIME LALANNE

There are many popular views of Rouen, generally including the river, but I am not aware that this particular one has ever been taken before Those who know Rouen will not need to be told that the large church to the left is the Cathedral, the small one in the middle St. Maclou, and the large one to the right St. Ouen.

For our present purpose, which is not the illustration of localities, this etching is interesting as an example of a very beautiful combination, that of trees with distant towers; and it may be doubted whether there is any other place in the world, except, possibly, Oxford, where this combination can be seen so perfectly as at Rouen.

Of these towers the two minor ones of St. Ouen are new, and the deplorable cast-iron spire of the Cathedral is recent. M. Lalanne has contrived, even at a distance, to give an idea of its meagre character. It has, at least, the quality of extraordinary altitude.

Rouen. 1884
Maxime Lalanne

and woods in connexion with every pleasant place, and they had an imaginative sympathy with trees destined to be carried to the extreme by Dante when he made the branches feel and bleed. Wherever a poet is born, in Greece, Scotland, England, Italy, or the East, he speaks of the presence of trees with pleasure or delight, and notices their absence either regretfully or else as an important negative element of the stern and dreary effect that he is endeavouring to produce.

The truth is that a solitude is not so solitary if there is a tree in it, and if there is a group of trees we feel it to be almost peopled. A tree is much nearer to us than a rock, it is already a sort of humble relation, not inferior on all points, but entirely at our mercy, which gives a sort of pathetic interest to its existence. Wherever Man is, the tree can only live by his permission, so that in all populous countries the tree expresses Man's desire that it should be there, and gains something almost human from his tolerance. He has often gone much beyond mere tolerance, by inviting the tree to live upon his land; he has planted it and become almost its father, its only conscious father, watching its growth year by year with a gentle paternal feeling. To cut down trees is felt to be a kind of slaughter, to protect them is the sign of a tender and merciful disposition.

A brief comparison of the tree and the mountain in relation to man is enough to show how much nearer to us is the sylvan than the stony world. A mountain stands where it stands in absolute defiance of human will, and often in direct opposition to human convenience. For unnumbered ages mountain chains have separated mankind so as to make commerce either difficult or impossible. All the mechanical powers at the disposal of the most consummate science (which mankind have spent thousands of years in acquiring) have only resulted in making a few very small holes in the mountains, so far apart that most of the inhabitants have to go much out of their way to find them. The forest never offered a serious impediment to human intercourse. It is easier, even, to make a good primitive way through a forest than elsewhere, as the trees supply the wood for the plank road. In early conditions of society they give the most convenient building materials and the best fuel, in later and more advanced societies the finest woods, though less necessary, gain new values from the appreciation of their beauty. Man's feeling that the trees are friends to him increases as he learns the art of ship-building, and reaches its highest point at the time when wooden vessels have attained their perfection and the fatal discovery has not yet been made that 'le meilleur bois pour les vaisseaux, c'est la tôle d'acier.' In those times a

maritime nation looks on its woods with a feeling of passionate patriotism, fondly believing that the quality of the oak grown there is vastly superior to that of all foreign oak. After being the pride of the woodlands, the great trees have a second and a grander existence on the waves, to perish at last under some famous and heroic name. Or you may climb up into the roof of some great cathedral, and be told that a forest of oak or chestnut has been used up in that intricate masterpiece of carpentry. All these associations with services rendered by trees that have been cut down long ago lend an interest and a dignity to those that are still living. A very tall and straight pine-tree instantly calls to mind 'the mast of some great ammiral.'

Where the woods have been destroyed men learn to regret them in a climate that has become an alternation of drought and destructive floods. Forests are friendly in making rain and rivers more equable. As soon as this is understood men begin to plant again to repair the havoc that they themselves have created, and a late reconciliation takes place between the human and the sylvan worlds. Then comes the existence of trees under Man's authority, when they are planted in regiments according to his good pleasure, a state of things to be considered in another chapter. For the present our subject is limited to the trees of Nature's planting.

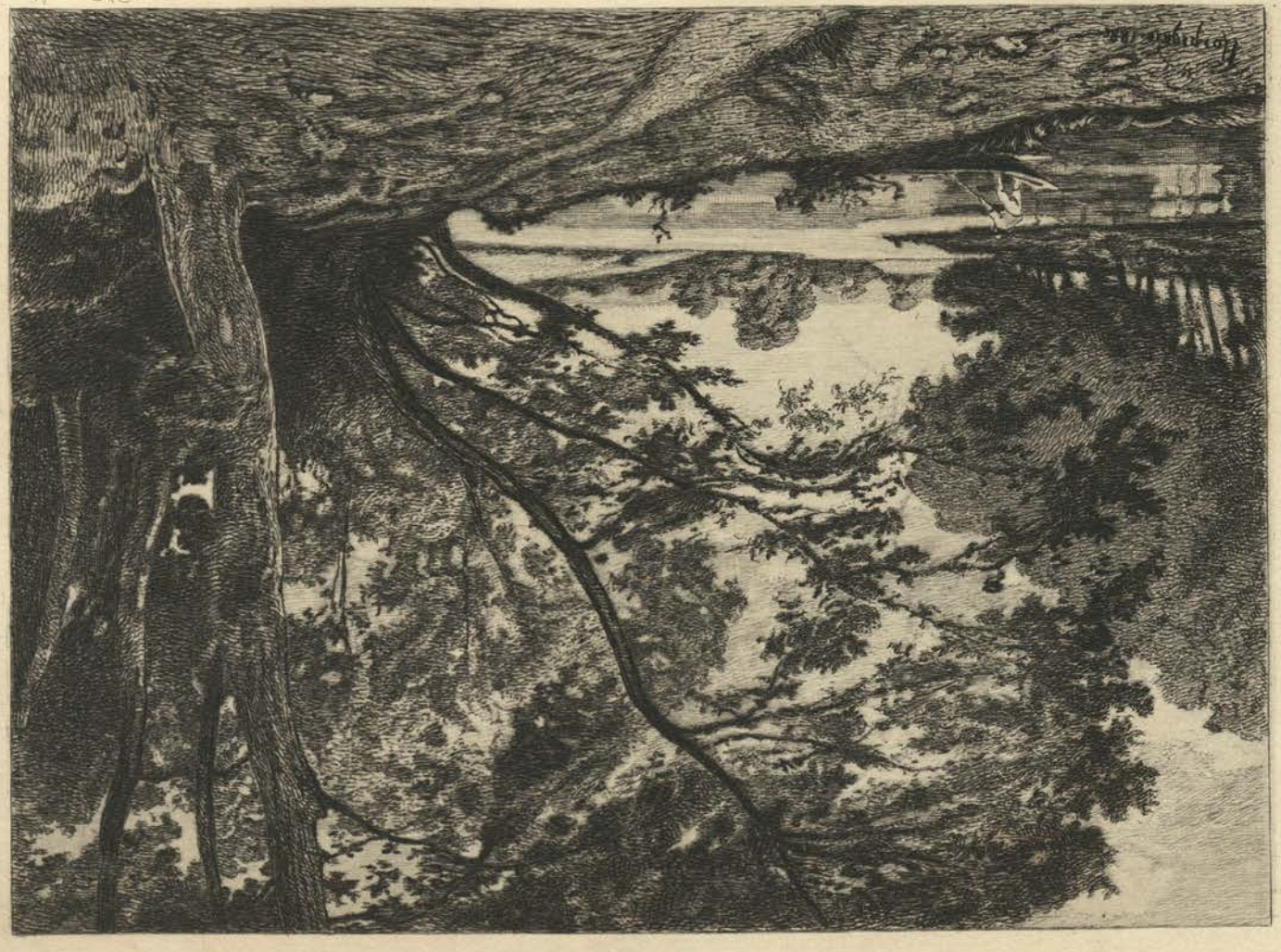
There are few productions of Nature in which the natural beauties and qualities are so independent of interpretation in the fine arts as they are in the sylvan world. It is intelligible that a man may have a passionate admiration for real trees without any artistic training, and be even hostile or contemptuous towards art for its imitative inadequacy, caring for it less and less as he appreciates reality more. I confess that there are times when I am wandering in the woods and do not care about painting in the least, though one feels grateful to it in the city. What pleases me in the natural world is the indisputable perfection of finish that reigns there, from the earliest bud protected by its natural varnish, to the full leaf that is extended like a lady's parasol, and incomparably more delicate in construction. The delicacy of organisation in trees is more visible than it is in animals, because the organs are more exposed. A rugged old tree that would resist the shock of an elephant has flowers that we examine with a magnifier. The elephant himself may have an equally delicate anatomy, but it is all hidden under his coarse skin. Besides this, whatever the men of science may feel upon the subject, it is difficult for ordinary mortals to avoid the conviction that Nature has done well to conceal the organs of animals, and well also to exhibit the far prettier organs of plants. The leaves of a tree are its lungs and its most ample adornment at the same

THE SEINE
Near the BOIS DE BOULOGNE

Painted by HARPIGNIES

Etched by G. *GREUX*

Henri Harpignies is one of the best known contemporary landscape-painters in France. His pictures give abundant evidence of a love for nature, and are often bright and lively as well as graceful; but I do not remember any evidence of deep or poetical feeling in his works. It is interesting to compare his treatment of foliage with that of Corot. There is not space for such a comparison in this brief note, so the reader is referred to the chapter on Trees in Art. All foliage in painting must be a conventionalism. M. Greux, in this etching, has strictly confined himself to the especial conventionalism of the painter without putting more of nature into the work than he found in it.



time, the healthiest human lungs are not more beautiful than the ribs that enclose and defend them.

The inferior rank of trees in the scale of creation makes them able to bear great injuries, and an infinity of small harms, without much loss of vigour, so that their most delicate organs which exist in great multiplicity, may be external. The passage from strength to delicacy, by subdivision is that from the trunk which is *one*, to the branches that are numerous and the slender sprays that are multitudinous. The unique thing, the trunk, is when fully grown strong enough to resist any power likely to be brought against it. The strength of the branches is less, but they are higher and safer, only likely to be bent by the light weights of climbing animals, and they are numerous enough for the loss of two or three of them to be without effect on the well-being of the tree. The most delicate sprays have only to bear the trifling weight of birds or the almost weightless touch of insects, and they are so infinite in number that the loss of hundreds or thousands of them leaves the tree not perceptibly the worse. It would be a mistake, however, to speak as if the tree had absolutely no concealed organs, since we know that he has his sap-seekers, his roots, not of much concern to us except that they are a necessity, but when, for some reason, the roots happen to be exposed, they give the tree a weird and ghastly expression of which we shall have something to say in the chapter on trees in art.

It may possibly have occurred to the reader to be present at a discussion about the beauty of trees, and to have the question put to him which species seemed to him the most beautiful. A friendly debate of that kind is useful in two ways, both because it makes us seek the reasons of our own preferences, and because it makes us acquainted with the preferences of others and the reasons they have for maintaining them. Since I cannot know the reader's favourite tree, it may be a pardonable egotism if I tell him which is mine. As the French monarch said, 'Ex omnibus floribus elegi mihi lilium,' so I would say, 'Ex omnibus arboribus elegi mihi castaneam.' My great admiration is for the Spanish chestnut-tree, at least in the way of sturdy and massive trees, but amongst light ones I am in love with the birch. To my feeling we have not in our temperate European climates anything comparable to these two trees for the two opposite kinds of beauty. The birch is indigenous to Great Britain, the Spanish chestnut an exotic in England, but not in France and Switzerland, where I first learned to appreciate it. The masculine character is even more strongly marked than in the oak, the bark is more deeply furrowed, the trunk at least equally massive, and the branches

apparently mightier in proportion to the trunk, though, in fact, they break off more easily than oak-branches in the great tempests. The comparison of leaves is entirely in favour of the chestnut, which has them of a most beautifully simple cut and curve and a fine rich green colour with a gloss, the oak-leaf being a poor little affair in comparison, and so cut as to have no completeness of line. The fruit of the chestnut is as superior to the acorn as the leaf to the oak-leaf, and when the female flower is passing to maturity it enriches the dark and heavy foliage of the tree with light greens that have a splendidly decorative effect on the magnificent orbed mass. I may say over again what has been said in *The Sylvan Year* that whilst the fruit of the oak is acceptable to pigs, that of the chestnut-tree is greatly valued by mankind, and occupies the singular position of being at the same time a delicacy for the rich and common sustenance for the poor. Amongst human aliments it would be difficult to mention any other, unless it be the date, which belongs so decidedly both to the poetry and the prose of eating.*

The chestnut is hardly to be left without an allusion to the quality of its wood. All human beings are utilitarian enough to estimate things with some reference to their own needs. It must be admitted that the peach and the orange amongst fruits, the pheasant amongst birds, the trout amongst fish, are not the less beautiful in our eyes for being welcome at our tables. Our admiration for the oak and the pine is closely connected with a sort of gratitude for their different kinds of usefulness. The chestnut is less commonly known in England, but for some of us it is closely associated with the noble roof of Westminster Hall. There is, I believe, no European wood at all comparable to it for the quality of remaining sound under exposure to wet and dry.

This comparison with the oak has the unfortunate effect of seeming

* The reader may remember Mr. Grant Allen's well-founded theory that eating is very difficult to deal with in poetry, and almost inadmissible except as dessert. I think, however, that he would scarcely object to chestnuts in a poem with an accompaniment of white burgundy, or with pure honey for a sauce according to the practice of certain gastronomers. The eating of chestnuts by the Roman people as nourishing food is poetically introduced by Macaulay in *Horatius*:—

'When the oldest cask is opened
And the largest lamp is lit;
When the chestnuts glow in the embers
And the kid turns on the spit;
When young and old in circle
Around the firebrands close;
When the girls are weaving baskets,
And the lads are shaping bows;'

and so on, a pretty picture of Roman popular life indoors, which was charming as a relief after the excitement and bloodshed of the heroic story.

to depreciate the acknowledged sovereign of British indigenous trees, so long bound up in our thoughts with the British navy, and loyalty, and Boscobel. There is even, perhaps, a remnant of the idea of its sanctity, coming down to us from the Druids. For our northern minds the oak is the sylvan representative of strength and longevity, and even in more southern languages *robur* and the words derived from it, such as the Italian *roborare*, the French *corroborer*, treat oak and strength as convertible terms. A boat-builder who strengthens his craft with a piece of oak literally corroborates it, whilst the politician who corroborates a statement does it metaphorically.

There is a very pretty contrast in spring between the gnarled old limbs of an oak (so much more expressive of stubborn resistance than of grace) and the fresh light green of the young leaves, which is often a golden green. As the leaves darken they have less the effect of a fresh chaplet on the wrinkled brows of age and fall into a sort of harmony with the stem and branches, becoming impressive only by their uncountable multitude. The oak is slow in assuming his full vesture, and very tenacious of it in winter, when it is red and sere, in fact he is slow in everything, as in his growth.

The birch announces summer by her early foliage not at all in harmony with surrounding leaflessness, but it is a welcome discord. The birch is always beautiful in herself, and not the least beautiful in winter, when all her light, woody structure is distinctly visible, from the silvery trunk to the dark purple sprays. In spring her light green foliage strikes the eye as crude, but in autumn the thinly scattered little leaves of pale gold tell with the greatest brilliance amongst the darker shades of the forest, and the whiteness of the stems is brilliant against the russets and purples and dark greys. There are times when this brilliance of the birch in autumnal sunshine goes quite beyond the powers of art. It is greatly heightened by the contrast of the black parts in the older trees, which occur in the fissures from the decomposition of dead cortical cells.

Of our English trees the beech is remarkable for the beautiful grey colouring of its bark and for its smooth texture. Beech-bark seems to fit like a glove, having an appearance of neatness far surpassing that of the fissured barks, so that the rounded and swelling forms of the trunk and the great limbs approach nearer to the purity of well-formed human limbs than those of any other English tree. The leaves are light and small for so massive a body, the flowers (in catkins) unimportant, the fruit nothing to the eye, but the foliage is fine in mass and graceful on

the sprays. In its early youth the beech approaches the elegance of the birch, whilst its light grey bark gives a certain gaiety to the woods, though it cannot rival that of the birch in brilliance. In age this tree has in certain situations a sturdy strength quite comparable to that of many old oaks, but in other situations it spends its vitality more in upward growth, and is more expressive of elegance than power.

There are so many kinds of willow that in a rapid review of this kind I must take one, the common *Salix alba* as representative of the rest. The misfortune of this tree is to be generally spoiled by polling, which is very destructive of its beauty—not entirely destructive, as the multitude of light sprays that grow from the polled head are not without the beauty of their own simple curvature, and the leaves upon them are, no doubt, just as pretty as those on the natural tree, but the beauty of the whole, as a whole, is absolutely sacrificed. When the willow is allowed to attain its full height there is a perfect gradation of increasing lightness from the trunk to the topmost spray. The twigs are not a mere crop like stalks of wheat, but parts of an elegant structure, and from their extreme flexibility they bend and move more elegantly in light breezes than those of any other tree. Nothing in the way of natural motion amongst trees can be more beautiful than the rhythmic balancing of a tall, well-grown willow on rather a gusty day. The whiter colour of the under side of the leaf gives the liveliest change when it is turned over as the wind lifts it, and there is a silkiness on the young leaf that makes it glisten with sheeny brightness in the early summer. To see this in perfection one should contrive to get a well-grown willow-tree against a pure blue sky on a day when the breeze is fitful and irregular with many short lulls of calm. The colour of the smooth twigs themselves often adds much to the liveliness of the spectacle. They vary from a bright yellow to green or a sort of purple. Notwithstanding their flexibility they may be broken off by sudden squalls of extraordinary violence. After one of these I have seen a field strewn over for a considerable distance with innumerable willow-twigs snapped off as if they had been broken by human fingers, but they may have been cut by hail.

The poplar is a much more beautiful tree than careless observers believe. I have said elsewhere, but repeat the expression as the most accurate I am able to find, that the poplar is to other trees what a tower, in architecture, is to houses. This illustration may be followed out in some detail; for example, I should say that poplars show to the best advantage, exactly as towers do, when there are not too many of them, and when they are accompanied by trees of inferior elevation and fuller form. They

BIRCH TREES

Etching by FREDERICK SLOCOMBE

Mr. Slocombe's etching serves the double purpose of illustrating what has been said in the text on Birch-trees and the chapter on Rivulets, at least it illustrates the rivulet in a state of peace. The slight stem of the birch goes well with a little stream, as a small house befits a small estate.

Fred Slocombe
1884

then fulfil exactly the office of towers amongst inferior buildings, carrying the beauty of the sylvan world high into the air.* It is a common mistake to believe that poplars in a natural state are monotonous. They may seem so to the unobservant, just as sheep appear all alike to those who know nothing about sheep, but there are really great differences in beauty between well-formed and inferior specimens. In autumn they become splendid in yellow, but the passage from green to yellow is gradual. The perfect autumnal colour lasts but a short time unless the autumn happens to be windless, which is very rare, and then the poplars are glorious till the first rude blast comes to strip them suddenly and all but completely, leaving only a few specks of gold amongst their pale grey, gaunt, upward-pointing branches. The reader is no doubt aware that poplar is the lightest of our woods as heart of oak is the heaviest.† It has a bad reputation for durability, but I believe it is undervalued on account of its cheapness. In France it is abundant and despised, but much used for common purposes under the title of 'bois blanc,' being very easily worked. Some critic may tell me that these matters concern joinery and carpentry rather than landscape, but I am convinced that the popular estimate of trees is influenced by the beauty or utility of the wood. The cedars of Lebanon owe much of their power over the imagination to the beautiful and durable wood that they furnish for human use and to its employment in Solomon's temple. Part of the contempt which is attached to poplars is due simply to the poorness of the wood, and yet it has two merits, its unrivalled lightness and a certain homogeneousness of texture that makes it split less easily than many woods reputed to be its superiors.‡

The ash is one of the most graceful trees we have, especially when

* The three finest poplars I ever saw used to be in my own garden, where they were planted together about the beginning of this century in honour of three little boys who were brothers. These trees were so near that their trunks joined at the base, but they still retained their individuality. They were blown down together in a violent storm. Half as tall again as the finest trees of their species in the neighbourhood, they were not less distinguished for beauty than for height, looking noble and dignified at all times, but at their best, perhaps, when the full moon hung in the sky beside them and there was mystery enough in the atmosphere to increase the impression of their colossal size.

† In Mr. Francis Galton's *Art of Travel* the specific gravity of poplar is given as ·38, whilst heart of oak (which of course sinks) stands at 1·17. Ordinary oak has a specific gravity of ·75, or about twice the weight of poplar.

‡ I built a canoe of poplar many years ago for lightness, not at all counting upon durability, as I knew the bad reputation of the wood. After much rough usage the boat was neglected and left to rot on the shore of a pond, winter and summer. At last I told my joiner to break her up, but after examining her he reported all her timbers sound, and said she was worth repairing. She is now in perfect repair, and quite serviceable.

ornamented by her 'keys' in the early months of the year. The toughness and strength of her wood, and its extraordinary weight, are not at all suggested by the elegant outward appearance of the tree, as the same qualities are by the stout and rugged character of the oak. The ash resembles some deceptive feminine organisations that attract admiration for beauty, whilst nobody suspects the toughness and resisting power with which the graceful being is armed against the difficulties of existence. The foliage of the ash is light and pretty in small quantities, and masses handsomely when there is an abundance of it.

The alder is one of the commonest trees in England and in the temperate regions of Europe, and has just the qualities that are suitable for a creature that is very commonly seen. Few trees obtrude themselves so little on our attention. One cannot pass a chestnut or a willow without being immediately aware of its species, but however familiar we may be with alders, we can think of them simply as trees or bushes without noticing them unless there is some special reason for doing so. Nature seems to have provided them as the common garniture of streams. They are not ugly, but the foliage is rather monotonous and wanting in character; the time when the alder is prettiest is before the leaves are quite formed, when the tree is in flower and covered with innumerable catkins that hang well and have a light, agreeable effect like rather long tassels. The leaves are too round to be elegant, the bark is rather picturesque but in a mediocre way, having neither the brilliance of the birch, the smooth beauty of the beech, nor the masculine character of the chestnut. The character of mediocrity is maintained in the size of the alder, which does not reach imposing dimensions. Schacht observes with regard to the branches that the principal ones form an acute angle with the trunk, whereas the twigs upon them spread themselves horizontally.

The elm has an advantage over some other trees in showing its trunk and limbs well, even when enriched with abundant foliage. It grows so well in height that Bentham says it will exceed a hundred feet in rich soils, so that in this respect it approaches the majesty of the poplar, but as it is much broader than the poplar it has not its towering effect. The leaves are small, but the foliage is fine in mass, especially when many elms are seen together.

Of the pine family three species only, according to Bentham, are indigenous in Great Britain. These are the Scotch Pine, the Juniper, and the Yew. The Scotch pine, which is commonly called the Scotch fir, is really at home in the Highlands, and finely completes the beauty of rocky foregrounds. The trunk and limbs are even more visible in the Scotch

fir than in the elm, and are more beautiful in colour, their reddish purple tint being always welcome as a contrast to the head of evergreen leaves. In gorgeous red sunsets the bark turns perfectly crimson, and the cold green is warmed without ceasing to be green. I like to see the woody structure of a tree, which is its strength, and do not by any means desire that superabundant foliage which conceals everything till one might think there was no more organisation than in a haycock. Now, the trunk and limbs of a Scotch pine, if it is a handsome specimen, are grand in a certain combination of stateliness with wildness. The trunk is generally erect, but not stiffly so, and though the branches have always a definite character you never exactly know which way it will please them to twist and turn. There is no tree which so perfectly adorns and completes a rocky lake island as the Scotch pine. It is always an intense pleasure to me when I meet with this old friend in England or on the Continent, and especially in situations that recall the wonderfully fine situations that it often occupies in the Highlands.

The Juniper, which in England is but a shrub, attains in the forest of Fontainebleau the importance of a small tree with trunk and branches that have a wild and picturesque character, and acquire a certain importance in the foregrounds amongst the grey rocks of the forest. But wherever the juniper occurs, it is valuable in the landscape for its own special quality of green, and for the texture and density of its peculiar foliage. One of the most picturesque places known to me consists of hilly ground, covered with soft green turf, almost like a lawn, and adorned with a number of the very finest old chestnut-trees, not crowded, but far enough apart to allow an almost perfect development for each. On this turf the juniper flourishes luxuriantly, and gives exactly the variety that is required, when without it there would be too much grass. Bentham says that the English juniper, when erect, is two or three feet high, or even four; without including the extraordinary junipers of Fontainebleau, I have often met with the common shrub in France, when it considerably exceeded these measures, and have a recollection of a few specimens that were as tall as a well-grown man.

The Yew is a most valuable tree in landscape, and it is to be regretted that we do not meet with it more frequently. The darkness and solemnity of its evergreen foliage are valuable for themselves and for the brightness and gaiety that they give to other trees by contrast. The branches are very numerous, the trunk becomes very substantial in old individuals, and the tree attains a wonderful age. It might, perhaps, be

argued that the wood of the yew is the best of all our English woods. It is of a fine close texture, hard, and of a rich dark red colour. It is very strong, very flexible, good for bows, and it takes a fine polish. A noble old yew was blown down at the Holme, near Burnley, many years ago, and the owner had much beautiful furniture made from it, but such opportunities are rare.*

I had intended to confine this notice of trees in nature almost exclusively to species indigenous in Great Britain, but as I began with my favourite the chestnut, which is an exotic, I will mention two or three other foreign trees that have been acclimatised in England or that are familiar to British tourists in France and Switzerland. Of the pine family the most important members are the Cedar of Lebanon, the spruce firs, and the larch. The Cedar has the quality that has been alluded to in the cases of the elm and the *Pinus silvestris*, or Scotch fir, it shows its trunk well, even when most rich in foliage. The cedar holds out its arms almost horizontally, the lower branches being depressed and the higher ones raised, the horizontal tendency being, however, generally dominant, as the vertical tendency is in the poplar. The characteristic habit of the foliage is to be held out flatly as a strong man might hold a table at arm's length, whilst in the poplar the foliage merely clothes the erect arms like a sleeve. The trunk and arms of the cedar are well to be seen in the openings between the tables or flakes of foliage, which seem to be arranged in successive stages, one above another, like the shelves of a dumb waiter, though they are not strictly so. Sombre and grave in aspect, like its near relation the yew, the cedar of Lebanon is by far the more imposing and magnificent tree. There are forests of it on the slopes of the Atlas, which must be as grand a sight as the firs of Switzerland or the chestnut-trees of Thessaly.

In writing English, with the desire to avoid the scientific nomenclature, one is rather embarrassed by the want of the distinction expressed in French by 'sapin' (*abies*) and 'pin' (*pinus*). We have 'fir' and 'pine,' but they are often used indiscriminately, as we inaccurately say the 'Scotch fir' for the *Pinus silvestris*, which is a true pine; and I observe that Mr. Ruskin commonly speaks of his favourite tree, the black spruce, as a pine, though it belongs to the genus *abies* and is a 'sapin.' No doubt

* If my memory serves me there were two dining-room tables, eighteen carved chairs, and some other furniture. The wood seemed less picturesque than oak, not having so much texture, but it was more refined, and appeared to supply the want that made our grandfathers like old mahogany, the love of delicate surfaces and rich colour.

the firs belong to the family of conifers, which is called the pine family, but it is a misfortune in popular and literary, as distinguished from scientific nomenclature, that the word 'pine' should be employed in a general way for the family and in a special way for a branch of the family, and that the general term should be occasionally given to members of a branch that bears another name.* The scientific distinction between trees bearing cones that thicken at the extremities of the scales (as in the true pines) and trees with thin scales to their cones, is perfectly observed in the common French words 'pin' and 'sapin.'

Firs and pines have been better celebrated in literature than in painting, and once they have been nobly and solemnly celebrated in music. If natural religion had rites and ceremonies, its believers might go to the fir forests on the great mountains and sing together 'Les Sapins,' by Pierre Dupont. I make no quotation from words that are inseparable from the poet's own deeply affecting music, which has the grandeur of the forest in its harmonies.

Firs differ from most other trees in their decided preference for a perfectly erect attitude, and they differ, I believe, from all other trees whatever in the conical form of their mass, which always, when unmutilated, ends in a point that a little bird may sit upon and overshadow with its small body. A fir forest has a character so entirely its own that no other forest bears any resemblance to it. The trees are so round, so regular, so straight, and so much alike, that the result, when they congregate in thousands, is a monotony that seems as if it would be endless. If there is anything in landscape nature that seems to me really tiresome and disagreeable it is a long walk in a forest of firs. As you go on and on the great army of stiff, unbending trees seems to stalk past you in dark green uniform, silent and innumerable. Will they never end?—will there never be any change in the regiments of them?—shall we never see the sky again except in glimpses between their heads? The ground is covered with their sheddings, the road goes on and on the same for miles that seem as if they were leagues. You may be on lofty mountain-ground and yet enjoy no prospect. A friend of mine, imprudently wandering alone in a fir forest in Savoy, and without compass, lost himself, and felt for many hours the overwhelming effect of monotony in

* There is something of the same difficulty in our nomenclature of nations. All the inhabitants of North and South America are in a general sense Americans, but we awkwardly use the word in a special sense for the inhabitants of the United States, so that to call a Canadian or a Brazilian an 'American' is a sort of error, and yet not an error, at the same time. It is, at least, misleading.

multitude. I, too, have been lost in a forest, but not of firs, and I remember what a relief it was to find a variety of trees.

The air in forests of pine or fir is impregnated with balsamic and resinous odours that we all feel to be healthy, and of late years it appears that consumptive patients go to breathe such air in the forests of the Adirondack. They live in tents that the air may always reach them, and it is said to have performed wonderful cures. In Savoy the *Pinus silvestris* has been made to yield a variety of products for clothing and other uses which are supposed to afford some relief in rheumatism. If a longer experience confirms these services of the pine family they will have acquired a new interest for mankind. In the meantime they give us a wood that is unrivalled in its own way, graciously lending itself to all common employments, and to some nobler uses in masts and beams, or more delicate uses in the truly vibrating sounding-boards of stringed instruments. Where the pines grow the chalet is easily built, and I remember visiting a rich man's house on the edge of a Continental forest where all the rooms were wainscoted in pine and had pine ceilings and floors, quite untouched with paint or varnish, or stain of any kind. The house was cheerful, and had a fragrance as of the woods themselves. It appears certain that a nation could do better without oak and chestnut than without deal. In those high or cold countries where Nature seems but a hard mother, she compensates for the rarity of her other gifts by sowing fir and pine in the richest profusion. The wonder still remains how they live where they do, often on quite inaccessible ledges, or putting forth long searching roots on the steeply sloping rock till they enter some crevice where haply a little nourishment may be found. They are amongst trees what the reindeer and the chamois are amongst animals, healthy in the bitter cold, and leading a life perfect within its own limits amidst the tempests of the higher Alps or the desolation of northern Scandinavia.

The larch, though not an indigenous British tree, is familiar to most of us, and differs from other conifers in having deciduous leaves. It is the only conifer we know that ever puts on an appearance of real gaiety. The evergreen pines and firs have a general and regular look of grave self-possession that seems to approach most nearly to cheerfulness in winter, when they are comfortably clothed, in comparison with the naked trees around them,* but they have a gloomy look in summer, because they keep their old clothes and do not conform to the pretty spring

* This is the reason, no doubt, why a fir is always chosen as a Christmas Tree.

fashions when light green is 'so very generally worn.' Each year, it is true, gives them shoots of paler green than their old leaves, but these are new patches on an old garment. The larch, on the contrary, is sad enough in winter, like most of our English trees, and then a larch-wood is nothing but an intricate confusion of grey stems and branches, but the time comes when, as the young leaves grow, the very air of a larch-wood seems to be suffused with a delicate green light that seems rather to emanate from the innumerable multitudes of thin short leaves than to be only their colouring matter. Then appear the delicately coloured catkins, the 'rosy plumelets' of Tennyson.

The Walnut is a foreign tree, indigenous in Persia and India, but known in Britain and rather common in France. It is one of the finest trees we have, and may rank next after the chestnut in some of the most important qualities of beauty. The trunk is round and strong, the branches very large in proportion, and thrown out far with a superb gesture. The bark is of a whitish grey, very beautiful in its cool tint, and giving a fine relief to dark mosses which often occur upon the tree, and besides beauty of tint the bark has an admirable texture, being slashed with many openings that give it some approach to the noble ruggedness of the chestnut. The walnut-tree is fortunate also in this, that its fine trunk and magnificent limbs are not hidden by its foliage. The foliage itself is of a noble character, the leaves of a handsome size and grave dark tint of green contrasting finely with the light grey of the bark. The fruit is acceptable, but not to be compared with the chestnut as a matter of alimentary importance. It is simply a dessert nut, having a place in poetry on account of an often-quoted line of Tennyson, and associated in the memories of most of us with the vintages whose merits it served to enhance and the desultory after-dinner talk that it accompanied. The wood of the walnut-tree is the common furniture wood for the peasantry in France, and so is rather held in contempt there, but the finer qualities of it are used for more valuable furniture, and are beautifully veined with capricious irregular markings of rich, dark brown. Although walnut-wood is excellent for indoor uses it is valueless when exposed to water, which is the more to be regretted that if it could be persuaded not to swell and cockle, the leathery toughness of it, and its indisposition to split, would make it perfectly invaluable for boat-building.*

* Yielding to the persuasion of an intelligent man who had a professional knowledge of woods, I once tried an experiment in boat-building with some Swiss walnut of most exceptionally fine quality. The result was extremely curious and interesting. Some of the boards used swelled and cockled frightfully, and had to be at once replaced with oak, but some

A foreign tree that has not been acclimatised in England may be mentioned in conclusion on account of its importance in southern Europe, and because the name of it, at least, is familiar to every one who has read the Bible. Travellers from Lyons to the south of France will remember as a new experience the first sight of the afterwards familiar '*olivier*.' It is an important tree in this respect, that it is a sure indication of climate. Where grows the olive we are in southern air, and yet it is a very near relation of the hardy ash of Scotland. With its grey-green and poor foliage and its body of mediocre growth, the French olive-tree is welcome only because the arid landscape where it thrives is otherwise so denuded. Grey olive, dark cypress, reddish rocky ground, and a little grass burnt dry by a pitiless sun, these are the elements of many a landscape in Provence. In Algeria, and even in Italy, the olive has more character. The trunk grows stronger and is twisted into strange weird forms that seem as if they implied some inward perplexity in its nature, as though the full freedom of African air and sun were not really freedom for this unhappy tree, tormented by constraints of a nature inexplicable to us. And however massive the old olive-tree may become in the course of many years, the leaves of it are still the same poor, thin, dusty-grey leaves that we know in the south of France, and the fruit the same small bitter fruit that seems so worthless and inacceptable at first and yet becomes, after a little judicious treatment, one of the most perfect gifts of Nature, a gift quite unrivalled and unapproachable in its own way, and better than many a luscious sweet, a real food and enhancer of other food, a gift to offer distinct thanksgiving for as men do for their daily bread. And then the generous oil! There is no oil in the world comparable to it for the service of man, and there is just one thing I want to say about it which has a singularly accurate application to the work we do in literature. The oil of the first quality, the really virgin oil (not that which is falsely called so), flows of itself with scarcely any pressure but the weight of the heaped olives themselves; then the second quality comes with a moderate pressure, and the worst oil with a strong pressure. The wood of the olive-tree is superlatively beautiful, with its fine close texture, its pale yellow colour, and its fanciful, erratic brownish-grey veins, a wood for the most finished cabinet-making and

other walnut boards endured the water perfectly, behaving as well as the best oak. I never could ascertain the cause of the difference. If all the walnut boards had been like the best of them they would have been unrivalled for a canoe, as they would bear endless knocking about from their extreme toughness and flexibility. The conclusion was that a piece of walnut might be worthless or invaluable, and that the uncertainty made it a wood to be avoided.

for caskets with elaborate hinges and ornaments of gold. Who would believe that it was first cousin to our own homely and useful ash that is good for everything from a wheelbarrow to an alpenstock? And yet they come together in the thoughts of a botanist, even as they did by a happy accident in Spenser's famous stanza on the trees, where he sings

'The ash for nothing ill;
The fruitful olive.'

CHAPTER XXXIII.

Trees under the Control of Man.

THE essential difference between the mineral and vegetable worlds, so far as Man's control is concerned, is that he is simply able to take possession of minerals where he finds them, and afterwards shape them to his requirements, whereas he can cause plants to come into being in places selected by himself, provided only that he conforms his plans to those conditions of soil and climate which are necessary to the health and vigour of the plants that he desires to propagate. It follows from this that Man's work may be present in results when it is perfectly invisible, for it is hard to say, in many cases, whether trees have been naturally or artificially planted in their present situations. In other cases the artificial planting is evident, and then the human art which has settled that trees are to be in such a place, and in such an order, becomes as legitimately a subject of art-criticism as composition in the art of painting.

The mere act of removing certain trees from a natural forest and leaving others standing is a fine art if done with a view to beauty, although human interference, in this instance, adds nothing whatever that is tangible or material. It only adds beauty, or reveals beauty, by taking away the impediments that prevented it from being seen. Amongst the recognised fine arts there are two that consist *entirely* in removal. In sculpture and mezzotint no grain of marble dust or copper powder is added to the work, the artist does nothing but take away matter, at first in large quantities and then in smaller and smaller quantities as his work approaches completion. The work of clearing in a wood is analogous to these arts when it is carried out with an artistic intention only.

Man's interference with sylvan nature may be of a kind absolutely undiscoverable except by the student of botanical history. Without the help of botanists we should be unable to discover which trees are indigenous in a country and which are the result of importations, for it frequently happens that imported trees take so well to the soil and climate that they thrive as happily as natives. I may mention as a case in point the complete success of the pseudo-acacia, or Robinia, in France.

It was introduced from Canada in the reign of Henri IV. by a professor of botany, named Robin, who sowed seeds of it in what is now the *Jardin des Plantes.* Thence it gradually spread all over the country and now exists in millions. As its long roots are useful for holding earth together, it is planted on railway embankments, and as it is a light, elegant tree, that does not cast too dense a shadow, it is often planted by common roads. The extreme rapidity of its growth, and the serviceableness of the wood for many different purposes, increase its popularity in an age that looks for quick returns. Its beautiful and abundant yellowish-white flowers that hang so gracefully and fill the air with a sweet if rather overpowering perfume, and its long compound delicately-coloured leaves, make it acceptable for beauty in addition to its various kinds of usefulness,* so it has become a thoroughly French tree, though quite unknown to the France of the Middle Ages. There are other trees of which it is not easy to determine whether they are really indigenous or not when the history of them is not known like that of the Robinia.

I have neither the space nor the knowledge that would be necessary to trace the effects of culture upon trees, but I believe that they are chiefly visible in orchards and gardens. I am not aware that the important landscape trees, such as the oak and the pine, have ever owed anything determinable to culture except their simple existence in some place where they would not have been planted by Nature. The highly artificial arrangements of fruit-trees nailed to walls and made to grow round hoops in various shapes were at first suggested simply by the desire to expose the fruit well to the sun and make it finer and more easy to gather, but a sort of perverted artistic instinct, or fancy, has led gardeners beyond the arrangements suggested by the scientific economy of fruit culture to the invention of devices that have no utility and only the foolish purpose of being as unnatural as possible, like the contortions of the india-rubber man in a circus. It is fortunate that the wretched trees which are so treated are generally in gardens enclosed by high walls that may be looked upon as hospitals for maimed creatures. I hope, for their sakes, that trees are really insensible of pain and unconscious of restraint and mutilation.

The culture of fruit-trees that are left to grow freely has led to a great enlargement of their fruit, and at certain times this has a real effect

* The leaves of the Robinia are good food for cattle, and horses are extremely fond of them. The wood is better than any other for burning, and is very durable in buildings, besides being pretty in furniture.

upon the landscape. In the cider-producing countries of England and France the apple has, in its season, a great share in the painting of innumerable natural pictures. The years when fruit is most abundant initiate us into a kind of beauty that the poets have often imagined, when the fruit is as important as the leaf and the branches are so heavy that they droop under the rich burden and have to be propped and supported. At these times the contrast between the globular fruit and the thin, beautifully curved leaves is one of the most effective in nature. It is sometimes enhanced, as in the orange-tree, by a striking difference in colour, but here the contrast is needlessly powerful. To my taste the perfection of it is in the quince-tree, where the large fruit only gets yellower as it ripens, hanging heavily by a thin stalk from its involved and tortuous branches and shaded by its green leaves, downy on the under-side as if for the comfort of the fruit.

Our forefathers scarcely admitted wild nature close to their country houses. They evidently had a feeling, whether they were conscious of it or not, that a severe art like architecture required a gradation between itself and wild nature, an intermediate stage in which nature itself should exhibit with the utmost plainness the authority and the handiwork of man. It was found that certain shrubs and trees, such as box, thorn, privet, lime, yew, and hornbeam, could be made to grow in a dense and close fashion, and be cut square like walls, or even made to take the shape of birds and beasts, so they became the materials on which the rude art of the country squire and his gardener freely exercised itself. The original desire for something orderly and formal near the house was not irrational, it even belonged to the higher artistic reason that an age of naturalism denies and sets aside, but it was pushed to an idle extravagance which led to an excessive reaction.

The finest tree for walls and bowers of dark verdure is the yew. Unfortunately it is of slow growth and associated with melancholy ideas, a tree more frequently found in churchyards than elsewhere, as it poisons cattle and cannot be left within their reach. Besides this the colour of the foliage is so gloomy and sombre that the large class of people who are very easily depressed by anything that has solemnity dislike it as they dislike the shadow of Death. For me, who have lived for years with six clipped yew-trees visible from my study window, the tree is associated with the peace most favourable to my pursuits, and it seems to me that an old house is never quite complete without some formally cut yew-trees in its garden. I like the gravity of the yew, and have no objection to be reminded by its tranquil longevity of the shortness

WOODLAND LANDSCAPE

Painted by MEINDERT HOBBEMA

Reproduced in Photogravure by *BOUSSOD & VALADON*

This picture gives evidence of Hobbema's usual desire to make the most of trunks and branches, and exhibit them plainly even at a time of the year when the foliage is abundant. The group of trees in the middle distance shows a dead branch at the top, and the nearest oak trunk (which has few leaves, and has been deprived of its head) is the most conspicuous object in the composition. I never quite understood the lighting of this oak trunk; it is lighted all along the edges, on both sides, to detach it from the wood behind, in consequence of a supposed reflection from the road. The picture shows an appreciation of the value of branches and trunks in light opposed to others in shade, which has been carried farther by more recent painters.

Trees are seen at their best in groups of this kind, with sufficient space to detach the groups well from one another, and to permit effects of perspective.

This picture was bought in 1850 *from a private owner. Before that date the Louvre did not possess a single painting by Hobbema.*

of one human life, whilst the evidences given by it of past human interference make it a living link between the generations of mankind.

The hornbeam is a convenient and cheerful tree for arbours with its abundant light-green leaves and its close growth favourable to privacy. It is easily planted so as to form dense walls of verdure in a few years that may be arranged on the plan of a room—to be a summer dining-room. In southern Europe there is a pleasant habit of dining out of doors in the delicious cool of evening that succeeds to the burning hours. The hornbeam may be trained to build not only walls of greenery but a ceiling of the same, and in this way a 'salle de verdure' may be made of the living leaves, which is so closely protected from the external air that the heat in it may be stifling. The four walls are enough, and the best roof is the clear heaven when the stars are coming out.

Amongst the many proofs of the sure instinct with which a great territorial aristocracy has generally known how to deepen the impression of its dignity, it would be difficult to mention any more effective than the art by which the approaches to great houses have been ennobled by stately avenues of trees. Rows of magnificent oaks, placed as regularly as a line of soldiers, guard the approach to the hall; and as the humble visitor walks or drives between them he is made to feel that all this natural grandeur of giant bole and gnarled and knotted arms, all that wealth of foliage, all the strength of the good oaken timber that is there left standing, are but announcements of the power of the family which for generation after generation has held there its ancestral seat. Sometimes it is a triple avenue with the road in the middle space and nothing but green sward in the two others where the fallow-deer browse in the shade, the nave and the aisles of a long natural edifice brought into being by the powers of nature in obedience to the lamp of Aladdin, to honour the possessor of the lamp. We constantly see that Nature serves the rich man with her useful things, that she gives him stone and coal and iron, but in this obedient beauty of vegetation that comes at his desire, she adds the last finish of grace and honour to his fortune. Portraits of rich men may look imposing beside the traditional column and curtain, or statesman-like amongst papers and books, and yet I think that a land-owner looks most himself on a good horse and riding quietly under a great avenue of trees.

The art of planting for useful purposes has a powerful effect on the appearance of natural landscape, but generally in the direction of monotony, in excuse for which it may be urged that the most natural planting in the world, such as that of the Alpine forests, is often equally monoto-

nous, and that the full effect of certain trees is only to be judged of when they are to be seen in thousands. It appears to me, however, that so far as the charm of the landscape is concerned the enterprise of the planter may go too far and his work may be overdone. Some valleys have been planted so completely that you can neither see the forest for the trees nor the trees for the forest, you have no view, and not a single tree attains its independent development. You feel as if lost in a crowd, or rather each tree may be supposed to feel so. As for you, the position you occupy is something like that of a weasel in a field of wheat. Much might be said about the unpaintableness of dense and monotonous woods, but I leave that to the next chapter. All that needs to be said here is that a landscape entirely wooded and a perfectly bare landscape are both far from perfection; the bare landscape, however, has the advantage in giving a free range to the eyes of a man, and (if not too precipitous) free range to his feet also.*

* A friend tells me that I have not quite done justice in this chapter to the efforts of intelligent nurserymen in the direction of a perfect natural form. They pay a good deal of attention to the form of trees when young by removing branches that grow in such a way as to strike against each other in a wind, and they are careful to favour the attainment of the best tree form by giving their nurselings the room necessary for their growth. The accidents of wild nature often refuse this, as, for example, in a dense natural forest where few trees, if any, attain a complete and unimpeded development.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

Trees in Art.

SOME idea of the importance of trees in landscape art may be gathered from the elementary treatises on drawing which from time to time are published for the use of amateurs. The writers always appear to consider that trees are in landscapes what human beings are in figure compositions, and they give as much attention to the earth on which the trees grow, and to the hills behind them, as a figure-painter gives to the floor and walls of the room where his personages are acting their little dramatic scene. I never met with an elementary treatise on landscape art that dealt with rocks and mountains, and yet it might be argued that they are more important than trees, for their greater permanence, their superior dimensions, and the obvious fact that the geological world is the very land itself which ought to be paramount in landscape.

This overweening estimate of trees, which in comparison with rocks and mountains are but as the grass of the field, is connected with a slow historical development of ideas about landscape that may be traced through literature and art from remote antiquity down to our own time. In the enumeration of the mental acquisitions and accomplishments of Solomon, in the first Book of Kings, there are distinct statements (expressed of course in language intelligible to people who lived in an early stage of culture) that Solomon was a philosopher, a poet, a botanist, and a zoologist, but there is no statement that he took any interest even in the most primitive geology. The account of his studies of trees, though brief in words, is remarkably comprehensive, as well as emphatic, in expression. He was a dendrologist; he 'spake of trees, from the cedar-tree that is in Lebanon even unto the hyssop that springeth out of the wall.' And from the days when Solomon spake of the hyssop, to the day when a modern poet apostrophised a 'flower in the crannied wall,' and confessed that the true nature of it is unfathomable by human intelligence, there have always been speakers about trees. It was natural, therefore, that when landscape-painting began it should have appealed to an interest in the sylvan world that existed before it and without it, just as painters of the figure appeal to an interest in men which exists independently of painting. But it is more

remarkable that the predominance of trees should have survived the full institution of geology. This may be explicable by two causes, first because we see plants live and grow which makes us feel nearer to them than to dead stones, and secondly because they are more accessible to most of us than Alps and precipices can ever be.

The interpretation of trees in the graphic arts, and the slow development of it in art-history, can only be understood by first examining two opposite tendencies of the human mind that have reference, not to trees alone, but to the whole world of nature. There is the tendency to detach a thing from the confusion of accidental surroundings, and to represent that special thing with the utmost possible clearness, even to the extent of making the thing simpler than it is in nature in order that it may be more plainly intelligible. If to this love of clearness the love of beauty is added, so that the representation of the natural thing is in some degree purified and elevated by the idealising faculty of the artist, you have the Greek principles, which were to detach the thing for clearness and idealise it for beauty. Everybody who, whether in writing or drawing, likes to be very clear and simple in his statements or descriptions and who at the same time has a taste for a chastened and elevated kind of expression, has the Hellenic spirit within him. The disadvantage of it, I do not say the defect, but the disadvantage so far as the influence of the artist or writer is concerned, is that in modern times the Hellenic love of clearness and simplicity incurs the imputation of shallowness because all that it has to say or show is visible almost at a glance. When from this extreme clearness and separation of the thing described from all other things you pass to the opposite extreme of intentional mystery, intricacy, obscurity, confusion—full of hints, suggestions, allusions to a thousand things that are not explained or described—you arrive at a kind of art that is essentially not Hellenic but modern, a kind of art that has a nearer resemblance to the world of nature, at least in this, that nature is full of involved and intricate detail that cannot be made to look simple without sacrifice. This kind of obscure and confused art, that is not easily exhaustible, is more in harmony with modern feeling than the Greek clearness, and it is said to be profound because it answers better to the modern sense of the vast entanglement of variety that there is in the universe, and to the general inexplicableness of all things. This is a very short account of the matter, and I regret not to have room for illustrations from poetry and painting, but the reader will think of examples. What relates to our present subject is that the Greek spirit might be favourable to the study of leaves, or of

an isolated stem, but that the modern spirit is more at home in the forest.

We may also take note of the very curious fact, which at first seems paradoxical, that the study of leaves is an accessory of figure-painting and has very little to do with landscape-painting, nay, that it is positively inimical to landscape-painting. When the artist's attention is directed to leaves he draws them clearly one by one and forgets to draw the tree, and as leaves in nature exist in infinite multitudes he fails to give the notion of multitude and reduces them to a small fraction of their number in his need for individual definition.

In the *Journal of Hellenic Studies* the second plate,* from a vase in the British Museum, has for its subject Peleus bringing the child Achilles to the home of Cheiron, and between the two figures is the usual thin Greek tree to represent the forest through which old Cheiron roamed. It has a slight stem without sprigs till the branches begin, and then there are seven of them, curving upwards and adorned with a countable number of leaves set flat on each side the branch, never crossing it. I do not profess to know exactly what species of tree was intended; archaeologists often call one very like it a laurel. We are more fortunate in the kylix (shallow cup) with the exploits of Theseus, also in the British Museum,† because we know from the legend that the tree to which Theseus fastened Sinis was a pine. On the kylix it is represented as thin, long, and very flexible, with two large branches and a short one near the top. There is no attempt to render any characteristic of the pine. The leaves are much more like those of the willow, and are arranged in rows on each side the branch, which is more like the willow-branch than the pine. It is noteworthy that in another subject on the same kylix the robber, Skiron, is sitting on a rock (with the tortoise at the foot of it), and out of the rock springs a tree which is exactly of the same species as the supposed pine of Sinis. Were it not for the little berries on the laurel in the combat between Cadmus and the dragon of Mars, in another vase-painting, the two would appear much the same species of tree. There is a beautiful Etruscan mirror, representing Bacchus and Semele,‡ on which Apollo grasps the authentic laurel, a thin stem about his own height, with three little branches and a few flat leaves on

* The plates are numbered consecutively. The one here referred to appeared in the number for April and October, 1880.

† *Journal of Hellenic Studies*, April, 1881. Plate X.

‡ Engraved in Woltmann and Woermann's *History of Painting*, and also in René Ménard's *Mythologie dans l'Art Ancien et Moderne.*

each side of them. In the Etruscan wall-paintings in tombs found near Corneto the figures are divided by thin trees beginning to be leafy near the ground, and the leaves are all arranged in the same flat decorative way, and though more numerous than in the other examples are still easily countable.

Sculpture may help us a little towards an understanding of the Greek treatment of trees. There are a few statues, such as that of Apollo with the lizard, in which a trunk is represented close to a human figure, and in this case there is some realism in the swelling of the bark where the branches start, and in the creasing of it near the figure's uplifted arm. The unpleasant subject of Marsyas made the introduction of a tree-trunk inevitable, as in the Louvre statue, but since the exigencies of sculpture always require that the branches of a tree shall be lopped (unless it be in a bas-relief) we miss the chance of observing what the artist's conception of them may have been. There is more realism in the sculptured tree-trunks than might have been anticipated from the usual treatment of leaves, but this may be accounted for by the fact that a log of wood is as tangible and measurable an object as a man's leg, and therefore required no sense of mystery or multitude for the imitation of it. There is a bas-relief in the Louvre of the combat between Apollo and Hercules about the tripod; and here we have a complete tree consisting of a thick trunk with the beginnings of the roots visible and three short branches with the usual willow leaves (or whatever they may be), but here the leaves are not arranged in rows, they are rather in tufts or bunches, marking a decided step from decorative towards naturalistic art. Round the tree-trunk the serpent Python winds, exactly as in Christian art the serpent of Eden winds round the tree of knowledge. In another vase-painting the dragon of the garden of the Hesperides is represented by a large thick serpent twisted round the stem of an apple-tree. The tree is cut off at the top, but five branches have had time to spring, and on these you may count exactly fifty-one leaves and twenty-two apples. This is the Greek system of dealing with trees, to reduce the myriads of natural leaves to a few that can be drawn separately and counted, and to avoid the intricacy of twigs and branches by simply lopping them off.

It may, however, not be absolutely safe to conclude that the Greeks had no landscape-painting because we find only conventional and decorative representations of trees on vases. If it is true that the mural paintings at Herculaneum and Pompeii were not always essentially modern at the time when they were painted upon the wall, but rather, in many cases

copies or reminiscences of much more ancient art, it would seem possible that the painters of antiquity may have at least gone so far in the direction of true landscape-painting as to have attained the notion of mass in foliage. Some of the Pompeian pictures give large-leaved shrubs seen near the figures with much of the liberty and naturalness in the disposal of the leaves that were afterwards fully attained by the Venetians, whilst many of the landscapes really show foliage in mass, not so learnedly as in modern landscape-painting, but quite with the knowledge that masses had a light side and a dark side and a roundness that might be painted without insisting on the form of each leaf. The same observation of mass is to be seen in the Campanian interpretation of mountains, which, though extremely simple and primitive and without any of the refinements of mountain form that are perceptible to ourselves, exhibit, nevertheless, the important truth that the facets of a mountain catch the light.

In mediaeval landscape-painting trees were of great importance from the first, on account of the free decorative inventiveness of the mediaeval mind, that exercised itself in illumination and tapestry, and in patterns for dress, for all which leaves and flowers were the best natural materials or suggestions. The history of tree-drawing in the Middle Ages is very like its history in Greece. As Apollo and Semele were placed on each side the laurel, of which the leaves were few and distinctly individualised, so Adam and Eve were placed on each side the apple-tree, which was often represented as a bare thin stem branching into a sort of flat oval at the top that was filled with distinct leaves and fruit, and sometimes even surrounded by a line. In other drawings or paintings the tree was allowed to develope itself more freely, but the artist still attended to the individual leaves, and the tree was usually kept small, like the young trees in our gardens. Even in hunting-scenes where a forest is represented, as in the manuscript of the hunting-book by Gaston Phoebus,* the trees have short bare trunks and a few leaves, and are about the height of a man on horseback, often not so high. They answer, in short, to the trees in boxes of toys for children, except that they are more prettily designed.

The nearest approach to foliage attained by the mediaeval love of the distinct leaf is in the backgrounds to tapestries and decorative paintings designed on the same principles, where the leaves, although individually perfect, are so multiplied that the mere numbers make them appear innumerable. In this way the distinct designers of the middle ages attained

* The book is entitled *Des Deduitz de la chasse des bestes sauvaiges*, and is in the National Library at Paris.

a sort of infinity, though it is not the same as the real infinity of nature where details cannot be counted. One of the best examples of this is the background to Orcagna's fresco of the Dream of Life in the Campo Santo of Pisa, where the orange-trees stand behind the figures and fill the upper part of the picture from side to side with their dense foliage, studded with fruit, and between their thin stems every inch of space is filled with a diaper of flat green leaves to represent the close shrubbery or underwood in the garden. This is still quite mediaeval in spirit, because the leaves are distinctly drawn, and are all countable, however numerous; they are also decorative, as primitive art was sure to be.

It is difficult to fix with precision the date when the idea of mass in foliage began to acquire importance, and I know that if I give a date some earlier examples may be found which would seem to throw it farther back in art-history, but occasional precursors do not invalidate the rights of a century in which an idea first takes effectual root. There is a very remarkable landscape background by Giovanni Bellini in his picture of the Death of Peter Martyr in our National Gallery, the most elaborate example of tree-painting amongst our older pictures. The idea is to show trees in a wood with stems crossing each other and supporting an immense quantity of highly wrought foliage. Well, in this picture the foliage is not flat, there is a sense of mass, and yet to a modern eye it is easily visible that Bellini was still hampered by the mediaeval interest in the leaf and driven by that to bestow prodigious pains upon the individual leaves that he portrayed by thousands. In the same fifteenth century a manuscript of the Epistles of Ovid, now in the National Library at Paris, was illuminated with subjects that have landscape backgrounds of a very advanced kind, and here the foliage is completely massed with considerable breadth of shaded parts and only touches for the lights.

We may remember, then, that classical tree-painting began with the stem and a reduced number of distinct leaves, but attained masses of foliage in the Campanian paintings or earlier, and that mediaeval painting began in the same way with the leaf and the stem, but led to masses about the fifteenth century, after passing through an intermediate stage in which there was a great multiplicity of distinctly painted leaves.

In the sylvan work of Albert Dürer, who evidently took a great interest in trees, the love of distinctness is still the predominant feeling, but as he had fully realised the idea of mass in foliage his distinctness is not obtained by drawing leaves where they could not be seen in nature, but by separating one mass from another with hard outlines and strong

contrasts of light and dark. In his near trees the masses are large, in the distant ones they are necessarily smaller, but he passes from one to the other with the same methodical resolution to make them plain. He was very fond of bare trunks and branches, often introducing a leafless branch amongst luxuriant foliage, and not unfrequently preferring a wintry tree as in the woodcut of 'Christ taking leave of His Mother.' He would even be at the trouble of engraving a stem as bare as a sculptor's, for example, the tall trunk behind which Death partially hides himself in the plate of 'the Knight and the Lady.' It is probable that these tastes were influenced in great measure by the technical exigencies of burin-engraving, which can deal with pure, decided curves so much more easily than with irregular suggestions of vague and mysterious detail.

The etching-needle is much superior to the burin for the interpretation of foliage, so it is not surprising that an etcher like Rembrandt should have drawn trees with more freedom and power than Dürer. The truth is, that so far as style is concerned Rembrandt could hardly be surpassed. His style unites the two virtues of strong delineation for massive and substantial things, such as the stump of a tree, and light handling for yielding things that may have motion, such as the leaves at the extremity of a branch. However slight may be his drawing of foliage he never fails to indicate the broad division of its masses. The foliage behind 'the Bathers,' in the little sketch-plate that bears that name, is divided into projecting masses that catch the light and hollow places of shade, though the background was the work of a few minutes. In the 'View of Omval,' a comparatively elaborate etching, the habit of seeing foliage in the mass is equally apparent, and is proved by the free use of diagonal lines in the shaded parts which almost obliterate the detail. In the small and slight but fine landscape called 'The Sportsman' (from the figure walking on the road), the trees to the right are summarised in a few powerful touches that sufficiently indicate the character of the trunks, and the branches are nearly bare, but we observe a distinct attempt to mass the little foliage that there is, by the artist's habitual method. Leaves are indicated in Rembrandt's system, but always in clusters and groups, never by the Greek plan of isolating them. He even carried the love of massing leaves so far that he did it for foreground plants, which Dürer would have engraved leaf by leaf. So far as style is concerned Rembrandt's method is *le dernier mot de l'art*, but there is no reason why modern artists, without descending to photographic minuteness, should not give more botanical truth, and a greater variety of species, of which Rembrandt illustrated very few.

The paintings, and especially the pen-drawings of Titian, are full of evidence that he loved sylvan scenery. He studied the trunk with an interest comparable to that of Dürer, and often drew the separate leaf which Rembrandt avoided, but he also took pleasure in heavy masses of foliage. His trees are nobler, grander, more stately than those of Rembrandt, but they are not so natural. In his pictures the trees are almost invariably dark, according to his system (which was to throw the landscape into twilight whilst the figures had rather a clearer light to relieve them), and therefore Titian's knowledge of trunks and foliage is, for us, more plainly set forth in his pen-drawings. He did not make any use of the ink blot, or flat black, which modern draughtsmen find to be convenient, but his pen-drawings are, throughout, exactly like old woodcuts, expressing the knowledge of substance only, with a very little effect and no local colour. The finest of them known to me is that of a clump of trees on rocky ground, with a mountainous distance, in the Uffizj collection at Florence (No. 813 in Braun's Autotypes). About a dozen large trees grow close together, the trunks of them being powerfully drawn, but without bark-texture, and the foliage above is very finely massed, but without mystery. The distinctly drawn trees on the hill-slopes in the distance remind us of Dürer by their numerous small countable masses. Critics occasionally exalt Titian's draughtsmanship of trees at the expense of modern work, but it is not probable that they would readily tolerate such abstract art in a modern landscape-designer, and unless he were allowed as much abstraction as Titian permitted himself he could not attain anything resembling Titian's results.* The drawings that are held up to admiration when they bear that illustrious name, would probably be condemned as hard and effectless if signed by a living Englishman.

The essential superiority of Claude Lorrain over all his predecessors and nearly all who have come after him was in the quiet elegance of his taste, which is conspicuous in nothing so much as in the arrangement of his sylvan compositions. He was not so vigorous a realist as Dürer, nor so strong a draughtsman as Titian, but in a certain aptitude for seizing upon the more refined suggestions of Nature he was, so far as sylvan subjects are concerned, incomparably superior to both. His massive and full-foliaged trees express sylvan richness with a superb abundance,

* For the convenience of some readers I may briefly explain that abstraction in art means taking some qualities that exist in nature whilst rejecting others that always exist along with them; for example, Titian's pen-drawings are abstract art because they take form and refuse local colour, mystery, and chiaroscuro.

whilst the slender trees whose trunks prettily cross each other in lighter groupings are drawn with a rare appreciation of their grace, and in both cases equally the forms are controlled by an instinctive love of beauty in composition. As an example of Claude's heavier trees, I may mention the landscape in the Louvre that is numbered 230 in the catalogue;* as an instance of the lighter, the pen-drawing called Narcissus in the Pesth Museum, reproduced in Mrs. Mark Pattison's 'Claude Lorrain;'† and as an example of the two combined, the etching called 'Le Bouvier,' of which a reproduction in heliogravure appeared in the third edition of *Etching and Etchers.* Claude's sketches of trees from nature do not represent him at his best. In the presence of nature he seems to have desired nothing more than a rough memorandum, in which he often blocked out his masses with lights and darks of a crude simplicity that gives no notion of his real refinement, and his feeling for composition would not be guessed at when the drawing is an ungainly note of a commonplace tree or wood. It is a mistaken kindness to his memory to praise his studies too reverentially or indiscriminately. Unlike many modern artists who make very close and minute studies but never compose a picture, Claude seems to have got rough and crude materials from nature, but to have excelled in that art of idealising and arranging them afterwards, which is the special function of the artist.

I have not space to examine in detail the foliage of the Dutch painters. I suppose their system of small spotty touches was never carried farther than by Paul Potter in the 'Landscape with Cattle,' number 849 in our National Gallery, and I shall have something to say about that system with reference to modern English painting. Dutch painting reached a wonderful mechanical perfection which has gained for it much sincere praise, and it seems almost wrong to say anything in disparagement of so much patient industry; but it always appears to me that there was a barrier of some kind between the clever Dutch workmen and the reality of sylvan nature, and that the barrier was their own too confident and assured skill in the handicraft of their art. Had they been able to forget themselves and think of the wild forest they would have made a nearer advance to the strongest modern naturalism; but they lived in the most artificial country under the sun, they had access to no forests, only seeing a wood here and there, and their minds were steeped in

* It has no title. It is illuminated by late afternoon light catching one side of the great tree, and in the foreground a girl is following a cow and several goats that walk in a sort of procession, two by two.

† *Bibliothèque Internationale de l'Art*, Paris. *Librairie de l'Art*

the *bourgeois* sentiment about nature. Still, it must be admitted that their contribution to the study of trees may have been necessary as a preparation for the better naturalism of our own time, and I believe they did more for some trees, especially the oak, than any other of the old masters. Hobbema happens to be exceedingly popular at present amongst picture-buyers, whereas in the eighteenth century his works could be had for a few florins, and were almost unknown. This appears to indicate that the Dutch interpretation of foliage is more heartily accepted than ever.* Flemish painting is generally of a much broader character, as for example in the freely designed foliage of Rubens, which, though often very slight in execution, and careless of small truths, never by any accident falls into the sin of mechanical detail. Cornelis Huysmans, a much less celebrated Fleming who is scarcely even yet appreciated at his true value, had a fine and ample way of treating foliage in large masses which in combination with rich colour gives his works an almost southern nobility of style.

The full development of modern landscape-painting was always likely to incur the loss of style which is neither compatible with details that are minutely false nor with details that are minutely true. It is time, now, to explain briefly in what the false detail of foliage consists. I do not exactly know who first made the discovery, but it was probably some painter of illuminated manuscripts, that leaves at some distance might be plausibly represented by little dots. Applied to oil-painting on a larger scale this meant little clots of rather thick pigment, and the most skilful Dutch workmen, by great practice, learned to apply these with wonderful dexterity. But however great the manual dexterity might be, the dots or clots of paint were wrong relatively to nature when they were not correct in scale, so as to represent the points of light on the real leaves, and if they were correct in scale they were too minute to be compatible with style. Besides this very serious difficulty there was always the risk that the touches or dots might not be carried through in proportionate scale and perspective, and also that by their broken and scattered character they might destroy the modelling of the masses on which they were applied. If the reader will take the trouble to master this very curious part of the subject, he will find many things intelligible in the tree-painting of good artists which

* Even after the severe condemnation of it by Mr. Ruskin, but this is only one instance amongst many which seem to prove that the most influential art-critics have no power against a painter whom the public happens to like, though they have considerable influence in inducing the public to look at works that it previously neglected.

LANDSCAPE WITH CATTLE

Painted by CORNELIS HUYSMANS

Reproduced in Photogravure by *BOUSSOD & VALADON*

The reader will see at a glance the almost Italian breadth and amplitude of style that distinguish the work of Cornelis Huysmans from that of his northern predecessors. The colour of the original picture is of a fine, rich quality, and altogether it would be a most desirable possession to hang in a private cabinet, though from its small size it is rather lost in the long gallery of the Louvre. Unfortunately the picture is much cracked, and in the first proofs of the photogravure the cracks were very conspicuous, but the engraver has succeeded in making them less obtrusive, though it was impossible to efface them altogether.

are not intelligible until the real objections to mechanical dotting, or 'niggling,' are thoroughly understood. It looks so plausible that the reasons for rejecting it are not at first sight apparent, but the finest landscape-painters try to do without it when they can. There is none of it in Gainsborough, and though Gainsborough was not a botanical landscape-painter he had a profound sense of sylvan beauty and majesty. There is very little of it in Turner, who always endeavoured to paint foliage in a most comprehensive way and more for the grace or strength of the whole tree than for the details of leaf or branch. Nothing is more conspicuous in Constable than the entirely personal, non-mechanical character of his touch on trees. He admired some of his famous predecessors yet did not imitate them, and he loved nature without ever being led into the vain pursuit of photographic accuracy. It is natural to pass at once from Constable to the modern French school which he influenced. The best French painters of trees have summarised foliage as much as possible in order to avoid the mechanical dot, but this does not imply that they would renounce the indication of a near leaf when conspicuously visible, like the light under-side of a bramble leaf in a wintry hedge. The best art is to suggest innumerable leaves and paint only a few. Amongst Theodore Rousseau's studies, reproduced by Amand Durand after the painter's death, is one very fine example of trees in mass seen dark against an afterglow on rising rocky ground,* and another of large oaks with strong trunks and broadly massed foliage,† but he sometimes fell into a petty execution as in certain studies of oaks which gave him an infinity of trouble and were not worth very much when done.‡ The landscape backgrounds of Troyon and Rosa Bonheur, though subordinate to their cattle, are often strongly and comprehensively painted with a natural elegance in the saplings, and great judgment in the sufficient indications of leaves. As for Daubigny he relied on a simple treatment of a theme as much in sylvan nature as in everything else, and, therefore, of course, painted his foliage in broad masses, as in the picture reproduced for this volume. Corot was more of an idealist, and though at one time he painted minutely and was really a skilful draughtsman,§ he afterwards formed a mature style which was an

* No. 17. Soleil Couchant sur les Sables du Jean-de-Paris.

† No. 7. Belle-Croix in the Forest of Fontainebleau.

‡ As for example, Nos. 19 and 20 in the same collection, in which the artist has endeavoured to draw each little bunch of oak-leaves separately.

§ An artist of my acquaintance, himself an excellent draughtsman of the naked figure, and formerly a pupil of Gérôme, told me that he had seen a painted portrait of a girl by Corot, in which the drawing was quite irreproachable. Another French painter said, 'On

abstract of nature rather than nature itself, and it is most interesting to notice, with reference to our present subject, how entirely he abandoned the attempt to render foliage minutely. His foliage is a sort of vague cloud, on which bunches of leaves are represented by broad strokes of the brush, whilst individual leaves are suggested by smaller touches in dark or light, not very numerous in themselves and quite devoid of any mechanical regularity in their application. Of course we at once admit that such painting is not nature, but neither is it a base mechanical substitute for nature. It is at the same time an expression of the intelligence of an artist, and a confession of the impotence of art. For beauty and grace in the arrangement of sylvan masses, for skill in the transition from dense masses to lighter ones, and from these, again, to the most delicate tenuity of the thinnest trees, nobody since the days of Claude has expressed, in art, so much poetic feeling as Corot. The reader is referred to a very fine etching by Brunet-Debaines from a landscape entitled 'Une Pastorale.'* There is a great mass of foliage to the spectator's right, which, though dark and dense, is skilfully prevented from appearing heavy by the interposition of stems and a nearer tree in half-light, and by thinner and semi-transparent foliage between the opaque mass and the sky. All that one regrets about the success of Corot is that it should have been purchased by the sacrifice of substantial truth. The sense of sylvan grace is there, and at once communicates itself; but when you come to inquire what are the species of the trees you find them indeterminate. You have light trees and massive trees, and although you may decide with certainty that such a tree is not a spruce-fir, or a cedar of Lebanon, you cannot affirm positively that it is an ash, or a robinia, or a young beech. If a tree has a large trunk you try to make out its species by the direction of the limbs as the foliage does not help you, and the result is uncertain, after all. A French biographer of Corot said that he was 'a Greek' in his art. I should say he was exactly the opposite of a Greek. The Greek loved definition so much that he represented a tree by a few leaves, each leaf being

dessine plus que Corot, on ne dessine pas mieux,' which expresses the peculiarity of Corot very neatly. His drawing was full of taste and style as far as it went, but it did not go very far.

* To prevent a mistake I subjoin a formal description. To the right of the picture is a clump of massive trees, with four stems visible, three of which lean to the left. Under the farthest of these is a group of three girls, dancing. Farther to the left is an isolated group of trees with thin stems, and nearly under these a male figure with outstretched arm is running towards the girls. Behind the light trees is a large building with a low dome in the middle distance, and behind the girls a lake. The distance passes away in vague low hills. In the middle distance, near the centre of the picture, a church is dimly visible.

carefully drawn, whilst Corot avoided definition so much that he would not even show the difference between the foliage of the oak and the walnut.

Our English draughtsman, Harding, was careful to distinguish the species of trees which he drew according to his own appreciation of their characteristics, and so confident was he of the infallibility of his selecting faculty, that his method of interpretation appeared to him the one absolutely right method. No doubt it appears brilliant at first sight and must always remain valuable and interesting as one of the many interpretative experiments of artists, but the clearness and certainty with which Harding exhibited some characteristics of trees was purchased by the neglect of others. His desire to unite foliage into masses led him, in many cases, to create a mass when the natural beauty of the tree depended upon a delicate tenuity, and it was a consequence of the same tendency that made him clip away the light sprays from the summits and sides of his trees as a gardener clips a hedge. His system involved the sacrifice of beautiful detail everywhere, indeed he went so far as positively to substitute his artificial vegetation, which was coarser than necessary, for the delicate botany of Nature even when the natural thing was quite visible enough to be drawn. He laughed at his travelling companion, Mr. Ruskin, 'for poring into the foreground weeds, which he thought sufficiently expressed by a zig-zag.'* But in spite of these drawbacks Harding's analysis of trees was so masterly that the thorough study of it must always be a valuable early discipline for landscape-painters. It has the immense advantage of clearing away before the learner the terrible intricacy and confusion of the natural forest and of presenting, as it were, an easier nature already simplified and analysed.

The present day is so late in the history of art that no new thing in the treatment of sylvan nature can be reasonably expected. The practical study of trees only can go in one of two or three directions. The painter must inevitably either have a tendency to breadth or minuteness of interpretation; he will either like mass or detail. The most extreme experiments have been already made in both these directions, and as for the Greek system of representing a tree by a few leaves on the top of a thin stem, it is impossible to go back to it after our modern discovery of quantity and mystery in nature. Nothing is left, then, but to express what each artist most strongly feels about the beauty or grace of trees, or what he knows botanically of their structure and life,

* Epilogue to the separate handy edition of the second volume of *Modern Painters*.

or what he conceives to be their cheering or depressing influences. This power of moving the spectator by sylvan influences has really much more to do with art than the exposition of scientific verities concerning trees. I know how disdainful the higher English criticism is of the work done by Gustave Doré, and I know how much he exposed himself to such criticism by a prolific and unchastened productivity; I am aware, also, that with regard to our present subject he did not show any profound science, but he displayed a singular aptitude for enlisting the sylvan powers in the service of his art. In the works of the old masters, with few exceptions, the trees are simply an ornament, they have nothing to do with the human action, and the painter makes no use of their expression to enhance the effect of his real subject. Doré never undervalued the auxiliary expression of trees. In the *Inferno* when Dante meets the lion the scene is placed in a rocky gorge, where gaunt and leafless trees cling with wild, far-stretching, naked roots to the barren and inhospitable declivities; but when Beatrice appears to Virgil her more gracious presence has a rich sylvan landscape for a background. When Virgil and Dante meet the shades of the great poets it is close to a grove of magnificent height and foliage that enhances by its stateliness the grandeur of the august persons. In the love-scenes in *Atala*, Chactas and Atala are surrounded by the most luxuriant vegetation, with palm-trees gracefully bending over them, but when Chactas bears the dead body of Atala it is in a forest of grim firs. When Chactas himself is bound and guarded by the savages who intend to execute him, the background is a dense group of cheerless cypress trunks. The cemetery of the Indians of the mission is surrounded by tall firs, half peeled, and closing the view completely. The art of using trees to help the expression of a design may give them an increased importance in figure pictures.* In

* I may mention as an example, though the figures are not on a large scale, an etching by Samuel Palmer in illustration of the fifth Eclogue of Virgil. The lines illustrated stand thus in his translation:—

'Untimely lost, and by a cruel death,
The Nymphs their Daphnis mourn'd with falt'ring breath.
O bowers of hazel, waters murmuring hoarse,
Ye heard that mother's cry; she, the dear corse
Embracing in a long, a last caress,
Planets and gods rebuked as pitiless.'

The etching is one of Palmer's finest works, and it owes half its expression of intense solemnity to his very bold but not less judicious introduction of three or four grand Italian pines, whose twisted limbs and massive, far-spreading heads of foliage are dark against the gloomy mountain, the starry sky, and the glimpse of distant sea. By the help of these trees, so gravely noble in aspect and bearing, Nature herself is made to express, with majestic dignity, a seriousness which is at least in harmony with human sorrow, if not exactly in sympathy with it.

pure landscapes it may be said that trees are valuable by their presence and by their absence also, for when they are absent the sense of desolation is complete. It is impossible to foretell what men of genius may do in the future, but I think it is clear that the one great discovery, that of sylvan beauty and grace, was made by Claude Lorrain, the work of subsequent artists having been rather to apply that discovery to other materials than to make any decidedly new discovery. The progress of botanical science, and the advance of photography, have led some artists, especially Mr. Maccallum, to a much more literal and minute veracity than was ever attained by Claude or would have been desired by him, and yet no sooner does a landscape-painter attempt to express an ideal than the influence of Claude's ideal conception of trees is sure to mingle itself perceptibly with his own. You find it in Turner, Samuel Palmer, Corot, and a multitude of others. The task of the future will probably be to unite the expression of feeling and imagination to more thorough botanical knowledge; and though botany at one time appeared quite foreign to art and led to a hard and minute kind of scientific painting when first studied by artists, whilst Corot simply discarded it, there seems no reason to believe that it would be harmful if once it became easily familiar. I may mention as an example of what the future may have in store for us the excellent illustrations by Mr. Alfred Parsons to Mr. Robinson's interesting volume *The Wild Garden.* They are a series of foreground studies, containing as much botanical truth as if they had been done for botanical truth only, and yet the drawings are as easy, as artistic, as little strained, as the far less observant work of the ordinary landscape artist. Surely there is no more reason why truthful botany of this kind should impede the exercise of a painter's imagination, than the mention of species should hinder the movement of a stanza!

'O Love, what hours were thine and mine
In lands of palm and southern pine;
In lands of palm, of orange-blossom,
Of olive, aloe, and maize and vine.'

CHAPTER XXXV.

The Effects of Agriculture on Landscape.

I REMEMBER a French peasant lad, who was only a farm-servant but with a great passion for rural beauty, and he told me that of all the sights he had seen in the world (and he had been to Paris) there was nothing in his opinion at all comparable to a fine field of ripe wheat just before harvest. On the other hand, I remember that when I was his age agriculture seemed to me just as much a spoiling of the world for money as the building of factories in the pretty vales of Lancashire; and though, as the years pass, early prejudices are softened and opinions become more moderate, I confess that much of the early dislike to agriculture remains with me still, and is revived in its full force by the increasing science of agriculturists, which means the increasing ugliness of the earth. This is simply the honest confession of one who loves pure nature, and it is not intended to be an attack on the oldest and most respectable of human occupations. I admire the skill of my good neighbours the farmers who plant something that appears to be at first only a particularly crude sort of green grass, but it grows and grows, and turns yellow, and the stalk gets quite strong so that it will bear the weight of a field-mouse or a little bird, and the head of it becomes a heavy wheat-ear, and the millions of such wheat-ears that bow together when the breeze crosses a single field may be ground into I know not how many ponderous sacks of flour to be seen afterwards in goodly loaves at the baker's. The farmer's kind of landscape-painting, first with crude greens and afterwards with golden yellows, has certainly a most acceptable result. His art deserves to be rewarded with the new French order *du mérite agricole.*

This being said, the reader who happens to be an agriculturist, or a lover of agriculture, will permit me to pass to the point of view from which this book is written. It is better, no doubt, to have a large industrious, well-fed population in a country entirely spoiled by agriculture and manufactures, than a small and starving population in the

vales of Connemara, but the beauty of landscape and the money return per acre are entirely independent of each other.

It is necessary, also, to establish a clear distinction between facts that are good for poetry, that tell effectively in melodious verse, and the real appearances of the facts described when they are not simply heard of, but seen with the bodily eyes. The simple verse—

'A rich and fertile vale,'

immediately awakens the most pleasing ideas. The mere notion of wealth and fertility is agreeable to human nature. We like to be rich, we like our land to be fertile, and yet 'a rich and fertile vale' may be destitute of beauty; it may be occupied by a scientific agriculturist who tolerates no trees, who divides his fields with moveable iron fences, and has only stall-fed cattle that pass all their days in a neat but ugly building. A steam-engine does the ploughing, and the old poetical work of the reaper is accomplished by a man sitting on a strange cast-iron invention and driving a pair of horses.

Even a very moderate degree of agricultural proficiency is destructive of natural beauty. I remember a very lovely river-bank not far from an old water-mill. It rose in a steep slope about a hundred feet divided into a deep gully, and as the old-fashioned farmers had not thought it worth while to do anything there, Nature had enjoyed complete liberty and had created a little paradise of oak and chestnut and wild cherry-trees with a natural garden of wild flowers down to the water. A new farmer came at an increased rental and cleared away this beauty as effectually as an Italian restorer knocks an old fresco from a wall. I have been watching for many years in other places the progress of agriculture at the expense of the lanes and streams. In old times they had margins that Nature made beautiful in her own way. The boundaries on the lane-side were irregular, sometimes so far from the actual roadway as to leave ample space for a wild lawn and a group of ancient trees. Weary travellers lay down to rest in these places in the cool green shade of far-extending branches, horses or oxen were then taken from waggon and cart and left to graze for a quiet hour in peace. Gipsies would pitch their tents there and unconsciously compose many a natural picture worthy of Morland or Gainsborough. The clever farmer is the enemy of all such places as these. By a gradual rectification of his frontiers, by a stealthy advance to what he considers a scientific frontier, he annexes all this waste territory. The next step is to cut down the trees and replace the luxuriant irregularity of the old hedges by a tidy little

straight fence as close to the road as possible. The river-side is dealt with nearly in the same way; but the river can to a certain extent defend itself in floods and objects to being shut up in a drain.

To this criticism of agriculture the reader may perhaps make the objection that more than one distinguished artist has painted cultivated ground. It is easy to suggest the name of Constable, for example, who appears really to have disliked wild scenery and who loved Suffolk fields with the intensity of patriotic and artistic sentiments concentrated on the same objects. I am quite willing to accept the suggestion and to examine a few of Constable's pictures. There are two notable ones in the National Gallery, the 'Cornfield' and the 'Valley Farm.' We find a strong reminder of agriculture in the titles, but in the pictures themselves less than might have been expected. Nothing is more remarkable in the 'Cornfield' than the extreme care with which the field itself, like one of Corot's lakes, is reduced to the very smallest area consistent with its visibility in the picture. We have a rich foreground composed of a rough lane, a weedy bank, and a little stream, with sheep, a dog, and a boy drinking; there are two masses of trees, that to the left of most noble growth and proportions, and between them a hedge crosses the picture. Beyond the hedge is rather a hilly distance, and between the two you get just a glimpse of a cornfield, as Corot gives you a glimpse of distant water. The 'Valley Farm' has also its grand clump of trees, and you see the farmhouse, but nothing whatever of the farm itself, the foreground being entirely occupied by the water of the river Stour on which are two men in a boat. In these two pictures, as in many others, Constable was so little agricultural as to adorn his foreground with weeds, and to these he often gave a much larger space of canvas than to the most valuable crops. In all his pictures of cultivated England there are many elements of wildness which he easily found in sylvan and foreground vegetation, and had always at his disposal in the free clouds and showers that diversified by flying shadows the dullest of the Suffolk fields. He had also the great resource of human interest in buildings and figures and human works of various kinds with which, as in the picture of the 'Lock,' he entirely eluded the difficulty of monotonous land.*

Those rustic painters who have given especial importance to cattle

* Let the reader imagine that he walks forward a few yards into the picture so as to get the old wood-work of the lock behind him, and the weeds, and the boat, and the water, and the clump of trees. He will then be in the fields that extend between the canal and the distant church. Does he suppose that Constable would have painted them? They do very well as a narrow band of refreshing colour in the middle distance.

are little embarrassed by agriculture. Nothing on a farm is uglier than freshly ploughed land, and yet Rosa Bonheur in her picture entitled 'Ploughing in the Nivernais' made even the turned earth interesting because it was in perfect subordination to her strongly painted cattle, brilliantly lighted by the sun of central France. A human figure so strongly attracts attention to itself that it will overcome even the barrenness of a field ready for sowing, as we see in many rustic pictures where a single peasant with some nobility of gesture casts the seed on the exposed and tormented earth.

Linnell was a powerful painter of harvest-fields. His name at once calls to memory sheaves of golden wheat standing in the stubble, or the same wheat not yet entirely reaped, but in all such pictures of his that I am able to remember the wheat was either contrasted with the rich dark greens of luxuriantly growing trees or else the subject was half a figure-picture from the presence and action of reapers, or the wheat occupied but a small portion of the canvas, the foreground being rich in material of a wilder kind that a modern agriculturist would remove. Of course, under these conditions, ripe wheat is acceptable enough. The colour of it is marvellously rich and pleasant, and the contrast with dark trees, just alluded to, is one of the most delightful to be seen on farms in the neighbourhood of woods. There is nothing in the way of perfectly serene landscape that can excel a windless evening when the round harvest-moon is just brightening in the warm grey, cloudless sky, and the yellow wheat is ready for cutting and the great trees are in their fullest foliage, their deepest green. Farm beyond farm, the country fades away into hazy distance till it seems lost in a vague, strange, beautiful unreality.

Few artists have illustrated agriculture more lovingly than Samuel Palmer, who inherited the Virgilian spirit, but when we come to a strict analysis of his works we find that he was not less careful than Constable to limit the area of paper or canvas actually occupied by crops. His subjects are, indeed, very frequently taken from cultivated lands, yet it is remarkable how frequently the composition depends for its richness upon trees. One of the illustrations to his biography is 'A Cornfield, Shoreham,' in which, indeed, the foreground is occupied by sheaves, but the rest of the picture is filled with great trees and a house and a church-spire. This is an extreme instance, and the drawing was done in youth when the artist had not learned to compose. With the experience afterwards acquired he would not have left that foreground without diversifying it with other material. His interest in the things used by farmers, their waggons, ploughs, &c., was always of a poetical kind, and therefore

attached to primitive ancient ways and far behind an age of patent new inventions. In short, the testimony of artists in favour of agriculture is of the most limited kind, it has a pathetic tenderness for old ways, it is constantly turning aside to admire what the agriculturist despises, and it is as remote from modern science as the Georgics of Virgil from the articles in an agricultural gazette.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

Figures and Animals in Landscape.

EVERY landscape-painter knows by experience the wonderful power of attracting attention that is possessed by any figure in a landscape, however insignificant may be its size, however ordinary its appearance, however trivial its action. It is well known that one of the greatest practical embarrassments of landscape art is to decide whether to give pure nature only, which looks desolate, or to introduce figures that may take the spectator's attention away from the scenery on which the painter has bestowed nearly all his serious work.

It is also well understood that a very few figures attract more attention to themselves, individually, than many, so that it is not an escape from the difficulty to isolate figures, but the contrary. In figure-pictures an isolated personage is especially exposed to criticism; when there is a group the personages distract attention from each other. This may have been a reason for Turner's evident preference for numerous groups. He liked many figures, variously occupied, and when he had what seemed to him an uninteresting piece of foreground he did not shrink from the trouble and risk of covering it with people. The trouble is obvious, and there can be little compensating pleasure to a landscape-painter who feels that all his personages together are not worth a little finger drawn by a master of the human form. The risk may be less obvious, but it is real. Figures are dangerous everywhere in a landscape, so that it requires either consummate skill or an instinctive tact and taste to introduce them in such a manner that they may belong to the scene. I have observed elsewhere that Girtin was less in the habit of introducing figures than Turner. Girtin's figures were always few and in some of his most impressive drawings he dispensed with them altogether. He had a strong interest in pure landscape and was so entirely absorbed by the unity and effect of the scene that his attention was not diverted from it by men or animals. He did not exclude them, but he seems to have taken them as they came, if they came happily, and to have contentedly done without them if they were absent. The result is that no living creatures can be less obtrusive than his. They are always either quietly resting, when they form part of the scene itself,

or else steadily going their own ways, never seeming to pose for an artist.

A curious proof of the terrible power of figures to destroy the sentiment of a landscape may be found in the works of some caricaturists who are by no means blind to landscape beauty, though they spoil it by the introduction of worldly or vulgar people who are out of harmony with it. A considerable number of drawings occur to my recollection in which clever men such as Leech, Keene, Caldecott, and Robida, have sketched scenery in Scotland, England, Switzerland, and Italy, which the most serious landscape artist might have chosen for its sublimity or its charm, yet it was impossible to feel either so long as the obtrusive and ridiculous people remained there. One sketch by Robida will have for its background a scene in the Campagna of Rome, with the broken arches of a colossal aqueduct stretching far away; but there is no danger of any sentimental musing over a vanished past so long as that jolly fat monk is riding there on his donkey, shaded by his big parasol. On another occasion the artist transports us to the steep, rocky slope of a mountain, whence we have a fine view over the Mediterranean with distant islands; but the prospect is interrupted by a fashionable Frenchwoman, who sits enjoying selfish ease in a chair carried on poles by four poor toiling Italians.

Sometimes a serious artist, in a spirit very different from this, will place a human figure in such an attitude and situation as to enhance the significance of the surrounding landscape. Some readers may know the famous Provençal poem by Mistral, which takes its name from its heroine, Mireille. In her pilgrimage to the Saintes-Maries, Mireille falls from a sunstroke. A painter who belongs to the south of France, M. Antony Regnier, selected this incident for a picture and represented Mireille extended lifeless on the burning sand in the pitiless southern sunshine, with only the wavelets of the Mediterranean lapping languidly the tideless shore and three towers in the remote distance, too far away for any human help to be hoped for. Now in this instance we have the remarkable result that the effect of loneliness and desolation is greatly enhanced by the presence of a human being. Without Mireille the distant towers would seem nearer, the desolate sands might be overlooked; but she lies helpless and the glaring desert around her seems a terrible immensity. Now let us try the effect of other figures in the same scene. Suppose Mireille removed and two French officers in the foreground mounted on horses of Arab blood with evident powers of speed and endurance, the mere presence of these active men in good

EVENING PRAYER IN THE SAHARA

Painted by GUSTAVE GUILLAUMET

Reproduced in Photogravure by *BOUSSOD & VALADON*

This well-known and impressive picture, first exhibited in the Salon of 1863, *and now in the Luxembourg, is a most valuable illustration of the effect of figures in flat landscape. The Arabs are not on a large scale relatively to the canvas, they are strictly landscape figures, and yet the foremost kneeling sheik occupies with his body and outstretched arms a space equal to two-thirds of the visible desert, measured vertically from the horizon to the base-line of the picture. The wonderful perspectives of a great plain are well illustrated by the division of the men and animals into four groups at different distances, the most remote group leading the eye far away, and preparing it for some apprehension of the vast level space that separates the foreground from the distant mountains, which in the original picture are boldly and truly painted of that turquoise blue that they often assume in the evening.*

The picture also illustrates the importance of architecture in landscape, for although tent-architecture is the most primitive of all except the wigwam, a tent is of great importance when there is nothing else, and here the tents repeat in some degree the forms of mountains, thereby associating the foreground with the remote distance.

Lastly, the picture is valuable as illustrating the peaceful appearance of a cloudless sky at eventide. At noon it is oppressive, after sunset it sheds a great calm over the whole earth. In the picture the air is quite still, and the smoke rises straight from the camp-fires, not without some allusion to the prayers of these true believers.

health with the means of rapid locomotion at their command would minimise the distance to the towers, and as the two officers would be society for each other the feeling of solitude would be at an end.

Another great power of figures in landscape is that they fix with some degree of precision the date at which the scene is supposed to be viewed. Nature herself has no dates except her immense geological periods, and these are beyond the sphere of art which concerns itself only with the world as it has been known to mankind, and within this period natural landscapes are dateless; but a figure immediately determines the century, unless it is a naked figure. In this way landscapes come to be associated chronologically with the life of the human race, and trees which have really lived in the nineteenth century, sunsets that have delighted an artist contemporary with ourselves, may be invested with I know not what poetry of antiquity by associating them with figures in an antique garb. There is a famous picture by Français called 'Le Bois Sacré,' in which delicate and graceful trees show their thin stems and light foliage against an evening sky illuminated only by the last gleams of the after-glow. Without figures this would be merely a piece of natural wood such as may be seen anywhere, but the artist has introduced three figures making an offering of sheaves and a garland to the statue of some goddess, and so we are carried back to classical antiquity at once. In Corot's beautiful 'Danse Antique,' * the scene is a landscape that may be in any age; there are rich full-foliaged trees to the right, lighter trees to the left, and a plain between them passing away to a vague distance at the horizon with a pool of water gleaming in it like a mirage. This would be simply a 'landscape,' but the presence of a few graceful dancers in what is supposed to be an antique costume immediately carries us to some vague poetical past like that which Virgil sang.

Not only may figures suggest a remote date for a landscape, but they may entirely change its moral character. The reader may remember Turner's vignette of 'The Garden' in the illustrations to Moore's *Epicurean*. Without the figures in the foreground this scene would be simply a view of some ancient city with an acropolis, as the foreground would not attract attention; but the figures immediately suggest the two ideas of culture and voluptuousness. These ideas, once suggested, extend their influence over the entire landscape, and even the sun itself does not

* There is a good lithograph of this picture in the second volume of *l'Art*, which makes us regret that lithography is not more frequently employed to interpret artists whose style of painting it would suit.

simply light the city but positively seems to favour the cultivated and voluptuous existence of the groups who play, or read, or bask languidly in his rays. Exactly the same effect of afternoon sunshine might be made to seem, in some picture of peasant life by Millet, an encouragement to humble rustics during their long hours of tedious and patient toil. In spite of the real indifference of all inanimate objects they may be made to appear religious by being closely associated with some religious act. Before the expulsion of the Benedictine monks at 'La Pierre qui Vire' it was their custom, when they heard the Angelus bell tolling at eventide from the monastery, to drop down upon their knees wherever they happened to be, even between the plough-handles, and repeat their evening prayer. The landscape is rugged and wild, the end of a field being sometimes blocked by a mass of granite or bounded by a gloomy wood, so that Nature is there anything but gracious or maternal; and yet when the monk knelt at evening in the midst of his labour, and the wearied oxen paused whilst he bowed his head, the whole scene took upon itself a religious character as the stones of a church do, though we know they are but senseless stones whenever we reason and reflect.* Now remove the monk and put a sportsman in his place, and see the effect upon the landscape! It is the same and not the same. The field is still there, the rocks, the woods, but a new spirit has taken possession. Wherever a man is hunting or shooting the landscape becomes what our ancestors called a 'chase;' and it is remarkable that however small in scale may be the sportsman and his dogs they seem to fill the whole scene, because we know that they are likely to ramble all over it. I remember an instance of this in a picture of moorland full of careful and laborious study, in which the artist had been imprudent enough to introduce a gamekeeper. Everybody looked at the keeper and overlooked the careful painting of rock and heather. Instead of being a landscape, as the painter innocently intended, the work had become a sporting picture. This is the reason why poetical landscape-painters are generally so careful to avoid the introduction of sportsmen. Peasants are not so dangerous because not so active and exciting; even their labours are slow, and they are capable of a wonderfully perfect restfulness in idle hours. Besides, they belong to the earth which they till, by daily and hourly association, and their costume is so humble and homely that it does not jar with the rough simplicity of rustic

* Another example that may be mentioned is the procession for the Rogations which in Roman Catholic countries goes into the fields when the priest blesses them. On that day the growing wheat appears to assume a sort of poetically sacred character even when we have no belief in any effect to follow the priestly benediction.

Figure and Leaves

From a Decorative Design by Albert Dürer.

things. It is easy to idealise them a little, easy to seize upon occasional unconscious graces and make them somewhat more evident without departing from the essential truth. They may seem awkward amongst fine folks, but in their own place they have more dignity than the equivalent ranks in towns. It is unnecessary to repeat what has been said elsewhere, and what painters have so often expressed in their own more convincing language, about the dignity of the great act of sowing. Almost everything that the peasant does is lifted far above vulgarity by ancient and often sacred associations. As for me, I have never seen a poor girl gleaning without thinking at once

'Of Ruth, when, sick for home,
She stood in tears amid the alien corn.'

The association of landscape with war by means of military figures presents the same difficulty which was noticed in the case of sportsmen; the soldier is too active, too adventurous, so that he attracts attention to himself and the landscape becomes accessory. I remember, however, a picture by Boulanger of Caesar marching in Gaul at the head of his legions where the landscape was made powerful by its extreme dreariness. The long column of Roman soldiers was advancing silently across a snow-covered territory without the slightest sign of human habitation, and in the most gloomy weather. Nothing could have better conveyed a sense of the stern and steady Roman determination than a landscape and climate so different from those of Italy. The same contrast has been marked in a converse manner by painting English crusaders clad in their hot chain-armour, under the burning sky of Palestine, or even our modern soldiers in the glaring landscapes of India and Egypt. When the landscape expresses any kind of extra hardship for the soldier it becomes important. A hard winter never seemed so miserable to me as when I saw the straggling cavalry crossing the hills of the Morvan in the deep snow, after their defeat on the Loire, many of them wounded, and all of them weary, cold, dirty, and discouraged. In Charlet's sketches of military life it is often associated with scenery that gains an interest from soldiers on the march.

We rarely see the association that may seem to have been designed by nature between the real human form, undisguised by clothing, and the beautiful sylvan forms. The relation between the two is so close that all accomplished draughtsmen of the nude figure have drawn leaves with pleasure, indeed it might be affirmed that the sight of the nude human form awakens in them the desire that the beauty of leaves should accom-

pany it. In a picture like the 'Adam and Eve' of Palma-vecchio the closeness of the apple-tree and the fig is delightful to the artist because he can draw them leaf by leaf. The same desire to associate human beauty with that of foliage led the painters of the Renaissance to choose such subjects as wood-nymphs and Diana hunting. In sculpture the association is so frequent as to include even common ornament, in which *amorini* are constantly seen playing with branches and garlands. The reader may easily follow out this subject for himself by consulting his own recollections of decorative work, in which he will find that, with a singular persistence through the ages, when nude human forms are given leaves are seldom altogether forgotten.*

As animals wear their natural clothing the association of them with landscape is easy at all times, and often extremely interesting on account of certain well-known resemblances between the animal and the sylvan worlds, such as that which exists between the branching antlers of a stag and the branches of trees, or between the legs of an elephant and their trunks, or between its ears and some large tropical leaves, resemblances of which it would be idle to make too much, though they are hints of that general unity of plan which exists in the natural world. The simple ways of animals, which are very seldom ridiculous, make them associate easily with landscape, which is, I believe, incapable of being comic. I have mentioned a sketch by Robida of a fat monk in the Campagna of Rome; there is a picture of the Campagna in the Luxembourg, by Camille Paris, in which the desolate grandeur of the same scenery is rather enhanced than diminished by the presence of noble long-horned bulls. I need not do more than refer to the good use made

* It may be remembered that when Constable taught the Life Class at the Royal Academy he arranged a sort of bower of greenery behind the model, and M. Lecoq de Boisbaudran, whose excellent system of educating the artistic memory has produced wonderful results, used to take his pupils with living models to retired places in the woods that the pupils might see the natural combination of the nude figure with leafy backgrounds. These experiments excited the greatest enthusiasm amongst the students who for the first time in their lives began to understand 'Man's place in nature' as a really visible being.

'Souvent, le modèle était arrêté par une exclamation des spectateurs qui l'invitaient à rester quelques secondes immobile, tant l'attitude qu'il avait rencontrée était remarquable et saisissante; d'autres fois, passant sous la branche avancée d'un grand arbre, il s'était comme enveloppé dans une ombre d'une admirable transparence, ou bien encore, monté sur un tertre élevé il se détachait en silhouette vigoureuse et pittoresque sur les nuages lumineux.'

'Un moment l'admiration s'est élevée jusqu'à l'enthousiasme: un de nos modèles, homme de belle stature et ayant une barbe majestueuse, se reposait négligemment sur le bord d'un étang, près d'un groupe de roseaux, dans une attitude aussi noble que naturelle. Le prestige fut complet, la mythologie était là vivante, devant nous: c'était un fleuve antique présidant au cours de ses ondes dans toute sa sereine majesté.'—*Éducation de la Mémoire Pittoresque, par M. Horace Lecoq de Boisbaudran.*

STAG AND TREE

Etched by HEYWOOD HARDY

The intention of this etching was to give an instance of a similarity that occurs sometimes in nature between animal and vegetable forms. In this case the resemblance is between a stag's horns and the branches of a tree.

Nature is full of resemblances, which have for their general effect upon the mind the encouragement of the conviction that all things flow from the same source. Even amidst exotic plants and animals the feeling of strangeness is not so strong as a wonderful sense of familiarity beneath the strangeness. There is a sort of rhyming between the forms of animals and mountains curiously illustrated by Mr. Harding when he engraved the outline of a human figure in a certain attitude and a range of mountains on the same plate; and also by Mr. Ruskin when he showed how a drawing of débris curvature at Chamouni could be turned with very little alteration into a bird's wing.

of red-deer in our own Highland scenery by Landseer, especially in such pictures as 'The Children of the Mist,' where they are well separated from suggestions of sport. They belong to the landscape as essentially as the chamois to the Alps. Of purely domestic animals the association of indigenous breeds with their own landscape is perfect so long as they live in a hardy and natural state, and are not spoiled in form, as well as in vigour and courage, by the fattening processes adopted in an age of advanced scientific farming. The finest cattle, in landscape, that I have ever seen are those of the variously coloured Highland breed. Though of small stature they have a noble bearing, and are unrivalled for the colour and texture of their fur. The fine French Charolaise race, though of far superior size and power, produces only a number of cream-coloured patches in the green fields. Sheep are too small to be of much importance away from the foreground, but they are constantly introduced there for the sake of pastoral associations connected with ancient poetry and religion. Texts that are known to us all have given the sheep a certain dignity and nobility in its humble station, and therefore a more important place in many rustic pictures than might have been otherwise assigned to an animal which displays less form than any other in our fields.*

* Since this chapter was written, my attention has been directed to a passage in *Our River*, by G. D. Leslie, R.A., in which he confirms what I have said about the beauty of the real human form when seen in conjunction with landscape. After mentioning Boulter's Lock, near Maidenhead, Mr. Leslie goes on to say:—

'The old view was extremely picturesque, and I painted a small picture of it, which is now in America, in the possession of my friend W. D. Morgan, with whom I have had many happy days on the river. Whilst engaged on this picture of an evening I could not help admiring the fine figures of the young Guardsmen who usually came here for a swim, as they stood illumined in the glowing sun's rays. It was a scene worthy of Titian himself. There is nothing, perhaps, finer pictorially than the effect of a nude figure in the open air, with trees, and water, and sunshine. It was the marvellous charm of this effect that induced F. Walker to paint his celebrated "Bathers."'

CHAPTER XXXVII.

Architecture in Landscape.

ONE of the most innocent amusements in which the present writer has ever indulged, and certainly one of the least expensive, has been the selection of sites for all kinds of buildings, from cathedrals and feudal castles down to the humblest little churches and cottages. It is an equally cheap entertainment to criticise the choice of sites that has actually been made, and to think how much better a building would have looked if only the architect had possessed something of our own discernment, and had placed his edifice in what we know to be the most favourable situation. Very practical persons may consider these to be idle fancies, for it is clear that the project of building on land that is not ours, and with imaginary money, is a project not likely to be realised. Yet our day-dreams may be a part of our education, and there is only too much evidence in the world that if the choice of sites had been a more habitual subject of consideration, many a lamentable error might have been avoided. To neglect the subject entirely until we have a house to build is like neglecting the military art until we have to fight a battle.

I have entitled this chapter 'Architecture in Landscape,' because architecture in the interior of towns would be rather outside the subject of this book. Town sites, as a general rule, depend more upon surrounding buildings than upon the configuration of the land, although there are a few cities, such as Edinburgh, Rome, and Marseilles, where the ground is hilly enough to produce very fine natural sites in the interior of the city, and if these were always fully taken advantage of, the landscape element would become important even in the streets. The positions of our own National Gallery and the *Arc de Triomphe* in Paris are well-known examples, and the new church on the heights of Montmartre will be another.

The first elementary idea concerning a site for any building is that of the pedestal, and the second idea is that of margin. Then you have a third idea which I hardly know how to express in any single English word; but there is an excellent French one, *adossement*, which means the setting of an object against some kind of backing, as a piece of plate on a sideboard is shown to better advantage when there is rather a stately

reredos behind it. If we examine these three notions one by one, we shall have almost exhausted the elementary ideas about architecture in landscape, though the application of them may be infinitely varied, and the examples already existing are so numerous as to be quite beyond the scope of a single chapter.

First, then, as to the pedestal. We all know that an object may be made to look more important by being set upon a kind of stand. This is done both for important works of art and for comparatively small ones. A colossal statue of bronze is set upon its heavy pedestal of granite, a little group in silver is put on a small piece of black marble; in both cases the work of art gains in significance from a material basis which in itself signifies very little, and the spectator is quietly deceived into the idea that the whole mass, casting and pedestal taken together, has the significance which in reality belongs to the casting only.

This brings us a step forward; we see the necessity for a pedestal, but we have not yet inquired whether there may not be certain necessities of relation between the pedestal and the work of art. Is it not possible that the work of art might be too large or too small in proportion to its pedestal, and might it not happen that, quite independently of the question of mere size, the character of the work of art might be unsuited to the pedestal on which it was placed? The answer to these questions is obvious, and yet from the way in which buildings are often erected on their natural pedestals it would seem as if the whole subject was obscure.

We are fortunate in having a very fine example of a building adapted to its situation in the great castle of the Kings of England. It does not stand upon a rocky height, like many a feudal fortress; its pedestal is nothing but a piece of chalk of very moderate elevation, and yet it is just enough. This sufficiency is due to the quiet character of the surrounding country which gives importance to a little hill. The castle itself is grand enough to be perfect with limited help from Nature, but if the reader will imagine it transported to the playing-fields of Eton he will appreciate the immense value of the actual site. In a mountainous country such a site would not be sufficiently imposing. There a royal castle ought to be perched, like that of Canossa, on a crag. Even the very site of Canossa added to the grandeur of Gregory VII. and to the humiliation of Henry IV. of Germany. To have to climb that steep, rough road and meet only contempt at the end of the journey was a combination of hardships far more perfectly devised than simple exclusion by the closing of a palace door in Rome.

It is not merely the size of a building, but its character, that should

determine the nature of its pedestal. If Windsor were really and simply a fortress-castle, a higher and more rocky site would be desirable. A fortress should be apparently inaccessible, and in every way repellent. It can only lose in the expression of grim and stern authority by being surrounded with the amenities of beautiful sylvan landscape and slopes that the gardener may adorn. I have elsewhere mentioned the Castle of Crussol, opposite to Valence, on the Rhone. It is on the summit of a bare crag so steep that a stone dropped from the battlements would find no resting-place nearer than the flat piece of alluvial plain between the foot of it and the river. There is not a tree upon the arid rock which is exposed to the full glare of the scorching sun and the fury of the persistent winds. So the castle of Ischia stands with its towers on the edge of a sheer precipice, and the sea-waves break below. In Scotland we have Tantallon—

'Tantallon vast,
Broad, massive, high, and stretching far,
And held impregnable in war;
On a projecting rock it rose,
And round three sides the ocean flows,
The fourth did battle walls enclose,
And double mound and fosse.'

In Turner's drawing, the rudeness and desolation of the site are insisted upon to the utmost, and enhanced by waves leaping into spray on a ridge of rocks in the foreground. The Irish castle of Dunluce has an equally wild situation, and there the precipices are higher. These are fine military positions, but when peaceful residence is intended a too great severity of aspect is out of keeping; and this is the reason why the site of Windsor is so fortunate for a castle that has become the palace of a constitutional sovereign. Windsor Castle exactly represents the present condition of the English monarchy. It is associated with the remote past, and yet almost all of it that the eye sees is recent. It stands high enough for supreme dignity, yet does not in the least express hostility to the surrounding country or anything like inaccessibility.

It is possible for a castle to combine the two characters of palace and fortress in its site. Culzean Castle,* on the Ayrshire coast, does this more perfectly than any other that is known to me. As you approach it from the land side, it is nothing but a great modern house with the usual facilities for entertaining guests, and a pleasant green park with trees and a carriage-drive to the public road from Maybole to Girvan.

* A seat of the Marquis of Ailsa.

CULZEAN CASTLE

Pen-drawing by GEORGE REID, R.S.A.

Reproduced in Héliogravure by *AMAND-DURAND*

It is thirty-two years since the author of this book visited Culzean Castle, and as that is rather a long space of time he has consulted an old diary to refresh his memory, and found the following passage :—

'The rocky cliff is perforated by many small caverns, and there are one or two immediately under the castle, which are of considerable size, and reach far back into the rock. One fissure was walled up with masonry, and I observed traces of building in two others. These fragments I supposed to have been contemporary with the old castle, on the site of which the modern one is erected. The Crag of Ailsa is preserved by the Marquis as a rabbit warren, and also for the innumerable sea-fowls which breed there. It is visible from the beach before the castle, and is a prominent object in the beautiful engraving of the scene which was published in "The Land of Burns."'

A faithful view of the castle from the land side does not convey the slightest suggestion of its imposing grandeur from the sea. Its towers stand in a long irregular line on the edge of a cliff, and although they are modern and not very logical in arrangement, either for defence or habitation, the effect is so picturesque, and from a little distance so poetical, that artists draw them as willingly as if they were some romantic old ruin, and this, I believe, could scarcely be said of any other modern castle whatever. If we inquire into the reason for this extraordinary modern success in castle-building, the answer is simply that the architect knew exactly how to combine his building in the most effective manner with a piece of sea-side landscape. He positively adorned and improved nature. If the reader doubts it, let him take the trouble to make a tracing of the cliff without the castle, and compare.

The site of Inverary Castle, on a beautiful, slightly sloping piece of green land near the mouth of the river Aray, by Loch Fyne, is one of the most perfect sites that could be selected for a palace because of its fine *adossement* against the steep and richly-wooded hill of Dunnaquoich and its opening to the loch, but it is not sufficiently commanding for a castle. This, however, is of little consequence, as the modern edifice is too much pierced with windows to retain a military character, and is obviously a castellated house. Even the old Scottish castles were frequently situated in low grounds, like the original stronghold of Inverary. Duart is a small castle, and Castle Urquhart is still smaller, being scarcely more than a minor Peel, but the magnificence of their situations on the Sound of Mull and Loch Ness gives them a grandeur out of all proportion to their dimensions. The reader will remember what powerful use was made of the landscape by Scott to heighten the effect of Wolf's Crag in *The Bride of Lammermoor*. It was necessary that the tower should be of narrow dimensions, that it might accord with the fortunes of the impoverished lord, but at the same time Scott felt and knew, as an artist, that although Ravenswood's home must be small in comparison with the mansion occupied by the Lord Keeper, it had urgent need of every element of sublimity except size. To attain sublimity without size in the building itself was possible only in one way, and that was by calling in the assistance of landscape. Now see with what art and craft this was done, and how Scott made the tower sublime by its situation, and heightened the natural sublimity of the situation by placing the old tower upon it.

'The roar of the sea had long announced their approach to the cliffs, on the summit of which, like the nest of some sea-eagle, the founder of the fortalice had

perched his eyry. The pale moon, which had hitherto been contending with flitting clouds, now shone out and gave them a view of the solitary and naked tower, situated on a projecting cliff that beetled on the German Ocean. On three sides the rock was precipitous; on the fourth, which was that towards the land, it had been originally fenced by an artificial ditch and drawbridge, but the latter was broken down and ruinous, and the former had been in part filled up, so as to allow passage for a horseman into the narrow court-yard, encircled on two sides with low offices and stables, partly ruinous, and closed on the landward front by a low embattled wall, while the remaining side of the quadrangle was occupied by the tower itself, which, tall and narrow, and built of a greyish stone, stood glimmering in the moonlight like the sheeted spectre of some huge giant. A wilder, or more disconsolate dwelling, it was perhaps difficult to conceive. The sombrous and heavy sound of the billows, successively dashing against the rocky beach at a profound distance beneath, was to the ear what the landscape was to the eye—a symbol of unvaried and monotonous melancholy, not unmingled with horror.'

A much less sublime situation than this is still sufficient to give distinction to a narrow tower, as we see in the case of Smaylholm, a building singularly poor in architectural interest, yet gaining much dignity from its site, which is a rocky mound of good form, and rugged enough to be associated with a border stronghold. A modern *château* like Abbotsford* is better without a rugged pedestal of this kind, but Turner gave Abbotsford a fictitious importance both by making the house look larger than the reality, and by placing it on a loftier and more commanding site above the river. We have the truth, or nearly the truth, in Mr. George Reid's excellent series of drawings on the Tweed,† which shows Sir Walter's home on its own unpretending site, and in the midst of the quiet landscape that he loved.

I have before me an interesting series of sketches by Mr. H. H. Statham, intended to illustrate a paper on our present subject, and I observe that amongst them he gives an example from Claude's *Liber Veritatis*, in which a temple is placed on the summit of a precipitous hill, and a large battlemented fortress, with towers, at the base of it. Along with this sketch from Claude Mr. Statham gives one of his own, in which the relative position of castellated and columnar architecture is reversed. In the second sketch the hill is crowned with battlemented towers, whilst temples and palaces are pleasantly situated near the quiet

* I borrow the French word in this case, because Abbotsford is exactly a *château*. The English word 'castle' conveys the idea of a *château fort*, which Abbotsford is not, and the words 'house' and 'hall' do not necessarily suggest the feudal reminiscences that survive in the construction of Abbotsford.

† *The River Tweed from its Source to the Sea*, sixteen drawings by George Reid, R.S.A. Reproduced in facsimile by Amand-Durand.

Inverlochy Castle, Loch Eil. *Here we are made to forget the want of interest in a mountain by having our attention directed to a castle which, though not very much in itself, is of the greatest possible pictorial value in a drawing.*

Castle Urquhart, Loch Ness. *This castle is merely a small peel or keep, but it is of great use here in hiding a considerable portion of the lake (of which otherwise we should have had too much), and yet we feel the size of the lake as perfectly as if none of it had been hidden.*

river at its foot. The second arrangement is unquestionably much more logical than Claude's, as it establishes a harmony between architecture and landscape. This leads me to venture upon the remark that although the Acropolis of Athens was a fine site for the Parthenon in the sense of making it generally visible, I am not sure that the temple was the best thing imaginable for the site. The fortifications of the Dukes of Athens which the present pedant-counselled Government have destroyed, were better in accordance with a military fastness of that kind. The ecclesiastical buildings on the Mont St. Michel are so closely connected with military architecture that the cases are not the same, besides which, the freedom of Gothic enabled the architects of the Mont St. Michel to give the place a sort of craggy finish much more in harmony with the mount than severe Greek art could ever be. Greek buildings of the classic ages were sadly wanting in those accidents of spire and roof which bear some resemblance to the sharper natural rocks. Mr. Ernest George when speaking of the wonderful Schloss Elz, insists on the importance of these features. 'Schloss Elz is rising out of the lofty rock,* round which the stream of the Elz makes almost a circuit. Here is the most delightful cluster of towers, turrets, and gables, dormer windows and bartizans, making a broken outline against the sky. The rich green hills that encircle the castle form a background to the gloomy walls that break out so fantastically above. Through all the turmoils and changes of four hundred years this castle has been saved to delight us. All its neighbours have but their roofless walls to tell us where was once a noble pile. How the Rhine castles would gain in interest could we picture them in their former dignity, their towers and turrets crowned like this Schloss Elz with high-peaked roofs.' †

When a site was not of itself exactly adapted to the building, it was often connected with it artificially in a manner that extended the building into the landscape. This could be done by clearing away the natural inequalities of a rocky site and facing parts of it with masonry. The formal character of a Greek temple might in this way be carried out round it and

* Observe the expression, implying a close relationship to the rock. The writer does not say that the castle is set upon the rock as a book may be on a table. Nobody would say that the Parthenon rose out of its rock.

† In the well-known comparison of the rocks in the Trossachs with architecture that occurs in *The Lady of the Lake* Scott freely uses the terms 'pyramid,' 'pinnacle,' 'tower,' 'turret,' 'dome,' 'battlement,' 'cupola,' 'minaret,' 'pagoda,' which prove that he had almost exclusively Gothic or Saracenic architecture in his mind, but the Greek temple is too remote from natural forms to suggest itself to his imagination even at a moment when it is wandering far in search of comparisons.

below it, by terraces and stairs, till nature was allowed to resume her freedom, and a great additional appearance of height and strength might be given to Gothic castles by cutting the solid rock to the shape of their towers and carrying masonry down the face of it till it was not easy to determine where the work of Nature ended and that of the military architect began. It is still easier to effect this connection with the landscape in the case of palatial country houses which are not built on sites difficult of access. One can hardly conceive how an architect can ever neglect such an easy means of increasing the importance of a structure as the apparent extension of it by stone-work in the garden, an art thoroughly understood by the builders of Haddon Hall when they made the terrace that every English artist knows.

The best lesson on the importance of margin for a building is a walk in such a place as Passy or Autueil, where a great deal of real architectural ability attempts to display itself on sites so small that buildings of the most incongruous character are huddled together and spoil each other by mere juxtaposition. A man of some taste and judgment, but limited means, purchases a small plot of building-ground at an astounding price, and then consults one of the many accomplished Parisian architects about his future residence. It is built and would do credit to all concerned, but unfortunately another man buys the next plot and erects a large house twenty yards off, after which the first is crushed into permanent insignificance, and is thenceforward really visible only in the architect's elevations. Not only is the neighbour's house injurious by its size, but the style of it is entirely different, so that it is impossible to get into the humour for enjoying both at once; it is like trying to read Shakespeare and Racine simultaneously. A house needs its margin of land quite as much as a print needs its margin of white paper, unless, indeed, the house is one of a row when it becomes part of a larger mass. Even a wood may be injurious if too near. When the writer of these pages desired to convey the impression produced by a very dreary forest château in *Marmorne* he still felt bound to give it a margin, though he took good care that it should not be a space of land pleasant to the eye :—

'The table-land was of immense extent. Both it and the valley of Les Chaumes, and all the hills visible from it, were entirely covered with dense forest.

'No, not entirely. In the midst of the plateau there was a great space of barren land open to the sun, which had burnt all the life out of the coarse grass. Here the rough wood-path totally lost itself, and I stumbled on the stony plain. But I needed the path no longer. In the centre of that dreary expanse stood the château of Boisvipère.

'The open space in the forest was as nearly as possible circular. The mansion

stood in the centre of the circle exactly. A single glance showed me that it was quite impossible that there should be any view from the windows of Boisvipère,—any view, I mean, beyond the monotonous belt of trees. The vagaries of human choice never selected a site so inexpressibly melancholy and oppressive.'

The chateau of Boisvipère was imaginary, though suggested by a rough hunting-seat in the Côte d'Or, which has, however, one side close to the forest. Since *Marmorne* was written I have learned the existence of a chateau in the Sologne which is curiously like Boisvipère in situation, except that it is not on a table-land but in a plain. It is surrounded first by a moat, then by a margin of dreary ground, and then by miles and miles of dense forest in every direction, without even a hamlet.*

A moat is a good margin, as it both isolates the building and reflects it, but almost all the old moats are now filled up or drained. The finest margin of all is afforded by an insular position in a lake. The island should be in such a proportion to the house as to afford a first margin of land round which the lake is a second and broader margin. A few of the best examples are Isola Bella on the Lago Maggiore, Belle Isle on Windermere, and Innistrynich on Loch Awe. On Isola Bella, the palace of the Borromeo family is surrounded by the most artificial gardens in the world, so that real nature only begins in the water itself; but it is not an evil that there should be a margin of human work round a palace. Such a building ought not, like Smaylholm Tower, to have the rude rocks close to its very walls. The circular house built in the last century on Belle Isle in Windermere, is surrounded by an English garden and small park, the island bearing just sufficient evidence of care and culture to make it a suitable land margin for the mansion. The house on Innistrynich was formerly too small for the island. It has since been enlarged, but there is a finer site on the higher rocky ground behind it, a site that ought to have been occupied long ago by a picturesque feudal castle; if this had been done there would have been nothing so perfect as Innistrynich in Great Britain. In that case the best treatment of the island itself would have been simple non-interference with its own natural beauty, just as the most artificial terraces may best become the island-site of an Italian palace in the climate of the Lago Maggiore.

Our forefathers often failed to perceive the necessity for a landscape margin, in consequence of their excessive desire for shelter. Gawthorpe Hall, in Lancashire, one of the most perfect old mansions in England, looked with all the numerous windows of its noble front upon an upward-

* This depressing place is still inhabited by the owner, a widow lady, whom I have met.

sloping piece of ordinary wooded ground; and when Sir Charles Barry enriched and renovated the building he enlarged its margin by excavating a level garden on that side and by creating a great artificial terrace on the other, the effect being a remarkable increase of stateliness and dignity in the house itself.

A few words remain to be said about what the French call *adossement*. If there is a rising ground behind a building it is sure to have an effect upon it for good or for evil. In the first place, the tendency is to create decided difference between front and back, the back will be towards the hill, the front towards the open country. The house is no longer 'foursquare to all the winds that blow;' its situation has settled a frontage for it, as if it had been in a street. The hunting-tower on the hill behind Chatsworth may have four fronts, the palace itself, with its back to the hill, must inevitably front the park. As to the degree of advantage to be gained from *adossement* that depends both on the nature of the hill and the character of the buildings. The finest example of *adossement* known to me is that of the city of Autun against the hills of Montjeu. The city is not built upon the slopes of the Montjeu hills, but on an elevation of its own separated from its background by a deep valley, so that there is some space and atmosphere between the city and the background which under certain effects is of immense value. The culminating point is occupied by the cathedral, with its tall central spire and two western Romanesque towers, whilst to the right of it, at some distance, is a tall watch-tower of the twelfth century at the angle of the Roman wall, and to the left the older tower of St. Leger, with many other buildings. A series of truthful studies of the various oppositions between these edifices and the steep wooded hills of Montjeu that occur in a single year would be in itself an education in effect. Sometimes the cathedral is distinct in silvery light against a screen of dark purple wood; sometimes the cathedral and all other buildings are a dark grey silhouette against a mountain that seems pale and remote: but the most surprising thing of all is, that on certain days when the atmosphere seems clear enough and the light good, both spire and towers seem as if they had simply vanished, being so confounded with the various greys of the wintry trees behind them, that it is impossible when you are in the plain to distinguish them, and nothing but perfect local knowledge enables one to guess where they may be.*

* This curious fact may be attributed to failing eyesight in me, but my sight is very good; and, to put the matter beyond dispute, I have tried the experiment with young people who on a clear day, at one o'clock in the afternoon, were unable to distinguish the cathedral and the *Tour des Ursulines.*

LA VIERGE AU DONATEUR

Painted by JOHN VAN EYCK

Reproduced in Photogravure by *BOUSSOD & VALADON*

This is one of the best known pictures in the Louvre, where it has occupied a conspicuous position in the Salon Carré *for many years. The perfection of its execution, and its marvellous preservation, give it a perpetual freshness. It is the youth of art, but what a sound and vigorous youth! Even now, after lasting four hundred years, the picture has a longer life before it than many works of the present century.*

The combination of architecture and landscape is so beautiful, that it has been imitated in reality. The present writer has dined on a summer evening in a loggia, *which was purposely copied from this picture by a lover of architecture, who happened to possess some old Romanesque capitals, and made this use of them. The view was like one of Titian's landscapes in the mountains of Cadore. Another example is at the castle of Beauregard, on the Saône, where the ground-floor between the wings is replaced by three open renaissance arches, which frame in a marvellous manner the landscape that an old rhyme affirms to be 'the fairest league in France.' It has sometimes been thought that Van Eyck's landscape was suggested by the Saône at Lyons, and the river-island with the buildings upon it by the 'Ile Barbe.' I have often rather regretted that the kind of landscape-painting here begun was not quietly developed afterwards in the same direction instead of being completely abandoned. Had it been still cultivated, at least in principle, those landscape-painters who desired to draw with the care and absence of exaggeration displayed, for example, in the hands of the kneeling 'donateur' in this picture, might have done so without blame, whereas in an age when exaggeration is the fashion in landscape, unexaggerated work is thought to be both feeble and eccentric*

The Spanish royal palace of La Granja is (I suppose from Ford's description) a remarkable example of *adossement*, as the mountain scenery behind it is of the wildest description, whilst the gardens of the palace itself strongly contrast with it by their highly artificial finish. There are twenty-six fountains supplied with pure water in abundance from the hills, and the whole place appears to be a superior kind of Versailles transported into a superior sort of Scotland. 'The localities,' says Ford, 'are truly Alpine; around on all sides are rocks, forests, and crystal streams, and above towers La Penalara, rising, according to some, above 8500 feet.'

Sometimes a landscape may gain greatly by being seen between columns, a fact that appears to have been known to Van Eyck when he painted the exquisite river-view in the background to the Vierge au Donateur. In that landscape we have two mediaeval towns* on the banks of a river connected by a fortified bridge, and beyond the bridge is an island with buildings upon it, whilst the river flows away in a curve towards a mountainous distance. Certainly the charm of this landscape is immensely enhanced by the beautiful architecture. The somewhat formal introduction of the river precisely in the central arch we feel to be of possible occurrence and therefore fortunate, whilst the painter has obviated a too complete formality by a happy curve to the left, which causes a small space of water to be hidden behind the pillar. The substantial though elegant architecture, so firmly and deliberately drawn in all its details, serves also to give the distant scenery a greater remoteness, and we are led insensibly from marble columns and carved capitals to the wild landscape of the mountains by the intermediate stages of city architecture and cultivated fields. Exactly the same thing in principle (though the columns are without arches) was done by Claude in a drawing now in the British Museum. It is a very slight drawing, but it fully suggests a combination of landscape and architecture of the most delightful kind, and Claude has added the luxury of a fountain with water falling from the lip of its basin.

In connection with this drawing of Claude's, let me say that if Gothic architecture gains by the neighbourhood of landscape, classical architecture positively needs it. Gothic may be picturesque in itself, but classical columns and architraves are so severe, that they create in the mind a sort of hunger for the more supple and easy forms of foliage. Even the mere softness of foliage is a relief after the hardness of the classic line. The Renaissance architecture of the Louvre, which is far from the severity of Greece, or even of ancient Rome, is immensely

* Or one town divided by the river.

benefited by the trees in Visconti's square, and the new pavilions of the Tuileries are fortunate in their nearness to the garden.

The effect of railroads and their engineering architecture upon landscape is evil rather by its suggestion of hurry and business to the mind than by real offence to the eye, except in certain places where an embankment shuts out a view, or a viaduct crosses a stream. The degree to which the mind interferes with the ocular impression may be realised by simply imagining that the embankment is an ancient military earth-work and the viaduct a Roman aqueduct, when they both immediately become much more easily harmonised with the landscape until the illusion is destroyed by the rush of the next train. A long succession of well-proportioned and lofty arches crossing a rocky valley is in itself beautiful, and a fine expression of human power, whatever may be its antiquity or its use. There is even a certain poetry already attaching itself to the older lines of railway, such as that from Paris to the Mediterranean, which has been used by many famous persons, has served for the conveyance of armies, and has itself been the scene of stubbornly fought battles. As for the 'rolling stock' on railways, a locomotive is a most imposing creature of man's ingenuity, and its long cloud of steam often adds greatly to the beauty of a landscape. I have seen the beauty of an ancient city completed, when wreaths of mist rose from the hills above it, and a passing train supplied its own wreath of the purest steam below.

PONT-Y-CYSSYLTTE

Drawn by DAVID COX

Etched by *F. SLOCOMBE*

The water-colour drawing, from which this etching is taken, is kept in the Print-room of the British Museum. The subject is in the Vale of Llangollen.

It was included amongst these illustrations as an instance of the effect that may be produced by a viaduct in an extensive scene.

A row of lofty arches (it is a matter of indifference whether the structure be a viaduct or an aqueduct) is so striking an expression of the skill and energy of man that unless it is positively ugly, which it is not easily, the landscape is likely to gain by it. Even the railways have contributed to the interest of the countries they pass through by the erection of great viaducts; and if we do not admire the finest of them, that is merely because they are recent and because railways are not considered æsthetic. If the same rows of arches were remnants of ancient Roman aqueducts they would be looked upon with the greatest interest and admiration, as we see in the case of the celebrated Pont du Gard, which all tourists visit, though they know nothing of an equally remarkable work —the Viaduct of St. Chamas, of forty-nine arches, which they pass over between Arles and Marseilles. That the effect of many arches is imposing has been settled for ever by the architects of the great cathedrals.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

The Two Immensities.

IN this concluding chapter I shall speak of the oceans of air and water, but desire to explain, in anticipation of a probable criticism, how it happens that so great a thing as the sea is to occupy a smaller space in this volume than the lakes and rivers which are so inferior to it in importance.

A book of this kind, though it may contain many references to the observations of others, is and ought to be in reality founded upon the personal experience of the author. It is well that he should not be continually bringing forward that personal experience in a direct form, but it must underlie all that he has to say, and without it he could have no real authority.

Now, with regard to lakes and rivers, my personal experience has been of the most ample kind. I have lived for years on a lake island, sailing in winter and summer, and in all weathers; and since then I have acquired an almost equal familiarity with rivers of the various classes mentioned in this volume, having navigated them in all the various ways known to an Englishman of strongly aquatic tastes. My experience of salt-water, on the other hand, has been limited to coasting and to short crossings of narrow seas. I have seen the Atlantic from the Western Islands, but that is all. I have never seen the real blue water of the ocean, and have never experienced the sensation of being on waters deep enough to engulf the Himalayas, and a thousand miles from a growing tree. On the other hand, there is this to be said in my favour, that if my experience of salt-water has been narrow, I have always been able to profit by it, being blessed with complete exemption from a malady which must be a serious impediment to artistic or scientific observation.

Let me confess, too, once for all, that the sea appears to me more wonderful than lovable. Like the higher Alps, it is too tremendous a manifestation of natural forces to come readily within the sphere of our affections. One may get passionately attached to a lake or river, or even to some bay or inlet of the sea, but to the great ocean itself, which has continents for its islands, and wrecks a fleet of vessels every year, I hardly know how the human heart can ever tenderly cling. Even the poets, who feel more intensely than we do, have seldom chosen to live at the sea-side. He who loved nature with the most enduring affection lived nestled in a

narrow vale beside a little lake, and yet he was in a maritime county, and could have gone to the sea-shore without hearing any other accent than that of his friends and neighbours. The poet who described the real Tantallon and the imaginary Wolf's Crag, and who made all Europe hear the thunder of the Shetland tides, chose for his own residence a home by a peaceful lowland river. Even that other poet, who lost his life in a Mediterranean squall, preferred those Italian shores where tideless waters reflect a beautiful land, and where the inlets of the inland sea most closely resemble lakes. The singer who praised the ocean most enthusiastically, who declared his love for it most vehemently, usually kept his yacht in Italian harbours, and the utmost extent of his nautical experiences took him no farther than the Bosphorus. The two immensities of Victor Hugo are, 'la Mer' and Paris, and of the two he prefers 'la Ville-lumière.' There can be no doubt whatever that Horace liked the trickling of the Bandusian spring far better than the 'mare naufragum.' His thoughts about the sea were those of a very timorous old lady.

He never mentions the sea without some reference to shipwreck or drowning. He is inexpressibly astonished when he thinks of that bold man who first committed his fragile bark to the waves regardless of the wind from Africa. Nay, he has even a theological disapprobation of sailing, and considers it a flying in the face of Providence to cross in impious vessels those spaces of the sea that a prudent deity hath placed between the divided lands. Most authors praise the courage of sailors. Horace speaks with shameless sympathy of their fears. If he apostrophises the republic as an allegorical ship of state, he urgently recommends it to remain safely in port, that being obviously the wisest thing for every ship to do. *Timidus navita!* what an epithet for a sailor! And what advice to avoid the waters that flow between the shining Cyclades! It is impossible to imagine an English poet writing in such a strain. Even when our sailors are going to be wrecked and drowned, we still have sympathy with their courage. There is a tone in Campbell, Allan Cunningham, Tennyson, nay, even in the gentle Cowper, which shows that we are not islanders in vain, and that something of the vigour of our northern seas has entered into our English blood. In 'Ye Mariners of England,' the storm-wind, instead of inspiring fear only, serves to increase the sense of patriotic exultation :—

'Where Blake and mighty Nelson fell
Your manly hearts shall glow,
As ye sweep through the deep,
While the stormy winds do blow.
While the battle rages loud and long
And the stormy winds do blow.'

VENICE FROM THE SEA

Etched by JOSEPH PENNELL

We have seen a thousand Venices in art, but hardly ever exactly this one that rises in clear-obscure beyond the lagoon with all her towers, a tantalising prospect, like a dream-city that one sees afar without the possibility of approaching it. Is there anything in the world like that line of palaces, churches, domes, and towers, now dark in the twilight, but in the glory of sunshine fair with a radiant, roseate splendour between a sea of emerald and a sky of Venetian ultramarine?

It is worth noting that if Mr. Pennell had felt himself under an obligation to obey the old conventional laws of picture-making, he would not, and could not, have conveyed his impression half so forcibly. Imagine the same subject with a made-up foreground of boats and people, where would be the all-powerful attraction of that extraordinary distance?

That is the true English note about the sea, for the royal navy, where tempest and cannonade may be heard together. Merchant-vessels and yachts hear the natural music only, but there is a wild delight in it not inadequately expressed by Allan Cunningham :—

'A wet sheet and a flowing sea,
A wind that follows fast
And fills the white and rustling sail
And bends the gallant mast;
And bends the gallant mast, my boys,
While like the eagle free
Away the good ship flies, and leaves
Old England on the lee.

'O for a soft and gentle wind!
I heard a fair one cry;
But give to me the snoring breeze
And white waves heaving high;
And white waves heaving high, my lads,
The good ship tight and free—
The world of waters is our home,
And merry men are we.'

The English sailor, in poetry and fiction, is hopeful if young and jovial in maturer years. In Tennyson's *Sailor Boy* the note of hope is struck in the first line, the lad is not the 'timidus navita' of Horace :—

'He rose with dawn, and, fired with hope,
Shot o'er the seething harbour-bar,
And reach'd the ship and caught the rope,
And whistled to the morning-star.'

The sea is rough on the bar, but that does not deter him. It is rough, too, in *The Voyage*, so that it does not simply move the buoy about languidly but tosses it, and yet the sailors are joyful, anticipating nothing but pleasure. We know that the poem is an allegory, but it is an intensely English notion to make a breezy voyage represent hopeful, energetic, and joyous human life in quest of the unattainable ideal, just as it was an intensely Roman notion to make a ship in port represent the republic prudently avoiding danger :—

'We left behind the painted buoy
That tosses at the harbour-mouth;
And madly danced our hearts with joy,
As fast we fleeted to the South:
How fresh was every sight and sound
On open main or winding shore!
We knew the merry world was round
And we might sail for evermore.'

These various extracts show one side of our English appreciation of the sea. An Englishman whose powers of enjoyment are not put in abeyance by sea-sickness will naturally, and almost inevitably, experience

> 'The exulting sense—the pulse's maddening play
> That thrills the wanderer of that trackless way.'

This is the communication of the sea-energy to ourselves. It is simply a stimulation, but certainly the strongest stimulation that we are capable of receiving from any part of nature that is not itself animated. To ride a swift and powerful horse, not on a road but across an open country, is the only other excitement comparable to that of sailing in a good breeze. 'Give me the yachtsman,' says Vanderdecken, 'that, tiller in hand, can stand on his own quarter-deck every inch the captain as well as the owner; who with one eye on the weather and the other on his canvas, can make his little ship talk to him in her own silent fashion, and who seems to impart to her movements a life, an almost breathing, bounding life, the counterpart of his own gallant and determined spirit, revelling in and enjoying the rapid rush through the foam-capped sea, the wild excitement of the hurtling squall, or the fierce battle with the strong gale through which he can carry her with the confidence and skill of a daring sailor.'

I have purposely left this to be expressed by a yachtsman of great practical experience, having been myself little more than a quietly observant passenger on the sea, but in all this quotation, vigorous as it is, I find, on analysis, nothing deeper than an enjoyment of the energy of Nature and an exultation in the writer's own well-proved courage and skill. It is a condition of feeling which may be described as poetical since it has certainly suggested fine passages to the poets, especially the famous opening of the *Corsair*, but there is more in the sea than this.

When Byron misanthropically expressed his satisfaction in the ocean's independence of human control, he touched, in his ill-natured way, the essential grandeur in it that overawes all mankind. There is no animal so powerful as to be anything more than large game for man, there is no tree so sturdy as to resist his axe, there is no river that he cannot bridge or deflect, no mountain that he cannot pierce or quarry, but the utmost extent of his conquest of the ocean is simply to cross it and place his life in jeopardy all the time. Gradually, in the long course of the ages, he has increased the speed of his motion on the sea, but it is still far inferior to the swiftness of his land transit, and any of the migratory birds can beat him. The strongest vessel, manned by the best-trained crew, can do

no more than simply divide the waters which immediately close again after its passage and are as if it had never passed. The last ship that sank in a storm is as completely effaced from the world as the war-ships of the Spanish Armada. At more or less frequent intervals a vessel is reported as 'over-due,' and after agonising anxieties is given up for lost. There is a dreadful list of ships of all nations that lie in unknown places at the bottom of the darkest deeps. Almost anywhere on land their vigorous crews would have made a good fight for life; they would have built huts, raised crops, and existed, but none can lay foundations in the unquiet waters or dig the sterile plain.

As the sea bears upon its surface absolutely no trace whatever of the history of the human species, it remains, in a certain sense, pre-historical, so that when we go out upon it we feel outside of human time, and brought into the presence of that nature which existed before our remotest ancestors. To say that the Channel is as it was when Caesar crossed it, that its short waves toss as in the days of William the Norman, that the long roll of the Atlantic is the same as that known to Columbus, is only to recall human actions, and therefore to give comfort to ourselves by connecting the sea with human history. It is a thousand times more awful to know that the ocean waves rose as they do to-day when there was not a single human being on the planet, perhaps before there was any animal existence whatever; and that when no sail is visible within the shoreless circle of the horizon, and we can forget for an instant the ship that carries us, the natural picture of water and sky before us lies outside of all human chronology. Nay, it even lies outside of geological chronology also, for whilst the land bears record of successive changes the ocean bears no record whatever, and for anything we see to the contrary, the water and sky before us may belong to any geological period, or to an antiquity before geological periods began.

This is the real awfulness of the sea—to be so completely outside of history. There is nothing on the whole surface of it for the human spirit to cling to. The poets who represent its waves as *hostile* miss the true horror of it, which is the combination of the most terrible power with absolute unconsciousness. It seems to me, when reading the Odyssey, that the interventions of irritated deities have the effect of rendering the sea itself less terrible, for the heart of Poseidon may be accessible to pity, or, if not, Leucothea may rise from the waters and be kind to us, or great Pallas Athene may interfere at our dire extremity.

Poets never can endure the indifference of the real sea, and so they

make it furious, according to the natural human tendency which attributes life to everything.

'I have known an old fishwife,' Lord Tennyson wrote in a letter, 'who had lost two sons at sea, clench her fist at the advancing tide on a stormy day, and cry out—"Ay! roar, do! How I hates to see thee show thy white teeth!"' This comparison of the sea to a savage animal, like a wolf or a furious dog, that displays its white teeth in anger, may at first sight appear to increase the terror of the storm-waves, but I think the reader will not fail to perceive, on reflection, that their real indifference is more fearful still, and for this simple reason, that if you attribute animal anger to a disturbed sea, you must attribute appeasement of wrath to a calmer one, and even cheerfulness, playfulness, and a kindly, happy temper to waters that ripple in the sunshine. In the reality there is no change of temper, nothing but an inevitable and indifferent submission on the sea's part to the wind that raises the waves and the moon that draws the tide, and this indifference is so foreign to our natural conception of things that we can hardly use the common expressions about the sea without denying it. In poetry the expressions that attribute volition and a changeful temper to the sea are inevitable, and must continue to be employed even in the most scientific ages. Mr. Morris, in the fine song of the Argonauts in *Jason*, attributes sympathy with evil-doers to the sea, and a diabolical spirit tempting to destruction:—

'O bitter sea, tumultuous sea,
Full many an ill is wrought by thee!—
Unto the wasters of the land
Thou holdest out thy wrinkled hand;
And when they leave the conquered town,
Whose black smoke makes thy surges brown,
Driven betwixt thee and the sun,
As the long day of blood is done,
From many a league of glittering waves
Thou smilest on them and their slaves.

'The thin bright-eyed Phœnician
Thou drawest to thy waters wan,
With ruddy eve and golden morn
Thou temptest him, until, forlorn,
Unburied, under alien skies,
Cast up ashore his body lies.'

In these verses the spirit of the sea is represented as maleficent, cruel, and coldly treacherous. When Lord Dufferin wrote a poem addressed to

LOBSTER FISHERS

Etched by COLIN HUNTER, A.R.A.

An interesting note might be written on the occupation of these Lobster Fishers; but such things lie out of the range of the present volume. We need only observe, in this place, that the baskets and nets used to catch lobsters are most valuable objects in a premier plan *of sea-waves, and that they save the rowing-boats from being isolated by extending the quantity of floating material in less massive forms, all which recommends them most strongly to an artist.*

Mr. Colin Hunter is a powerful and complete painter, by which I mean that he employs all the resources of texture, colour, tone, and handling. In etching his method is founded on abstraction and simplification, and therefore it does not produce the effect of his pictures, but rather that of his pen-sketches and memoranda.

the figure-head of his own yacht *The Foam* (and a very beautiful poem it is), the temper attributed to the sea-waves is at first joyous and afterwards eager, passionate, presumptuous.

'Now tinkling waves a peal of welcome rang
Against the sheathing of our brazen bows,—
No gladder hymn the rosy Nereids sang,
When, clad in sunshine, Aphrodite rose.

Anon, a mightier passion stirr'd the deep—
Presumptuous billows scaled the quivering deck;
Up to your very lips would dare to leap,
And fling their silver arms about your neck.'

A deeper note has been occasionally touched by one or two recent poets with an under reference to the modern oppressive sense of the immense spaces of time before and behind our lives. Rossetti, in 'The Sea Limits,' said that 'Since time was, this sound hath told the lapse of time;' but here, I think, the poet rather misses the main characteristic of the sea, that it does *not* mark time and is outside of time. Swinburne has made a finer use of it, and one more in accordance with reality in associating it with the persistent silence of the natural universe when we question it about the past and future of conscious existence. He asks the two Immensities, and gets only silence for a reply:—

'Friend, who knows if death indeed have life or life have death for goal?
Day nor night can tell us, nor may seas declare nor skies unroll
What has been from everlasting, or if aught shall alway be.
Silence answering only strikes response reverberate on the soul
From the shore that hath no shore beyond it set in all the sea.'

It is time now to pass from the poetical to the pictorial aspect of the great world of waters. Let us begin with the simplest effect of all, that of a perfectly calm ocean in perfectly cloudless weather. There is no sight on the planet so nearly approaching empty space as that. The eye has no object to rest upon except the unendurable sun himself, and if the time is noon, and the place on the equator, the sun is so much above us as to be completely out of the picture. Imagine, then, a breathless calm, a cloudless sky, and not a sail anywhere on the horizon, nothing but blue in gradation from zenith to water-line, and deeper blue in gradation from the horizon to our vessel. The isolation of the vessel under such circumstances is like that of a star in space. It hangs suspended between the two infinities of sky and water; and it may slowly revolve as a planet revolves upon its axis without conveying to those on board the slightest consciousness of motion. There is nothing for the painter to represent

except simply colour and gradation with one dividing line. The scene is the nearest approach to nothingness that can be found in clear weather and bright light. Not an ounce of solid substance is to be seen, absolutely nothing but a mixture of nitrogen and oxygen above, and a mixture of hydrogen and oxygen below.

After this monotonous spectacle the smallest cloud is a relief, and if the peak of a distant island emerges beyond the horizon, all eyes are turned to it at once, and go to it as a bird flies to the shore, seeking rest for its weary wings. The heart of man endures monotonous immensity, but does not love it. He desires the recognisable, the tangible, that which has features to be observed and remembered. What are the sea and the sky? Mere quantity of water and air, so many quintillions or sextillions of tons, not even localised, being in constant fluid motion and unrecognisable, in one latitude to-day and another to-morrow, but Ailsa Crag is an old friend, and we go on deck to see it when the steamer passes in the raw early morning.

Clouds and waves greatly relieve the monotony of a sea voyage. They make the sea so much more pictorial, that although artists will not paint a calm sea and a cloudless sky, without ship or shore, they do not hesitate to paint storm and clouds without any human interest. Waves may offer sufficiently large masses to be capable of arrangement in composition, and clouds have all the grandeur of the highest mountains, with a variety of colour and character excelling the variety of mountains.

The sun and moon are even more important at sea than in views upon the land, I mean as visible objects in the picture, for at sea everything is so unstable that the steadiness and apparent fixity of the great heavenly bodies offer a rest for the eye in the midst of disturbing motion, and they convey to the mind a sort of unexpressed assurance, being accepted by it as typical of the permanent order which presides over the flux of things. Even at sunset, when the red sun appears to sink into the waters, we are reassured by the majestic regularity of his motion. The moon shining clear and calm over a stormy sea at midnight is the most striking contrast of tranquillity with commotion that is known to us. Calm and bright in the clear heaven, far above rushing winds and tumbling waters, she fulfils her appointed course, and rules even the agitated ocean itself by her marvellous invisible influence. These thoughts which I have tried to express in words were not less clearly expressed in Mr. Dana's large picture 'Solitude,'* 'consisting,' as I wrote when it was exhibited, 'of nothing but an inky sea and a misty, cloudy, moonlight sky. Here we have nothing but desolation—without locality, for it may be anywhere on the sea; without

* Exhibited in the Paris Universal Exhibition of 1878.

date, for it may be at any time since the moon shone upon waters agitated by the wind, without history, for what historian has concerned himself with the transient existence of a wave?'

In spite of its want of definite localised history—for no person born at sea can be said to have a birthplace when it is a mere mathematical combination of latitude and longitude—the ocean has in a certain vague way a connection with the history of the human race, and especially with that of the maritime nations. This association, though so indefinite, is of great sentimental importance in the fine arts, where sentiment goes for so much. You cross from France to England, and think of Norman William's crossing with his fleet of little vessels, though the waves are not the same waves, nor the water the same water. You go to America, and looking to the western horizon, can see it still, if only you have imagination, with the eager eyes of Columbus, for whom it was the ever-receding boundary of the unknown. The nearer European seas are haunted by phantom fleets of Blake and Nelson, and not a wave breaks upon the shores of Britain without reminding us that they are still to be defended, as of old, upon the decks of our men-of-war.

The forms of clouds and waves are too various and complex to be treated satisfactorily in a volume that refers to so many subjects as this. They could be properly dealt with only in special treatises intended to be studied rather than read, and copiously illustrated with engravings of a strictly scientific kind. Since the art of instantaneous photography has been brought to its present wonderful perfection, the study of transient form has been made so much easier, that we are allowed an indefinite time for the examination of forms that in the reality of nature existed only for the fraction of a second. I had accumulated a certain quantity of material for use in the present chapter, including memoranda from nature, and instantaneous photographs executed by others, but one can only take the very roughest notes on ship-board in a stormy sea, and therefore it turned out, as might be expected, that all the real form was in the photographs. The practical difficulties in drawing waves from nature are insuperable, on account of pitching and rolling, frequent wetting from spray or more massive water, and the rapidity with which the vessel passes beyond the wave you are trying to study, not to mention the one supreme difficulty of transience in the form of the wave itself. The swiftest pencil sketching is all that can be done, and the only real use of it is to recall to mind the curious variety of size, shape, and character, there is in the real waves. This variety is strikingly conspicuous in the collection of rough memoranda before me. Sometimes the back of the wave is rounded like a lowland

hill, at others it rises into a toppling precipice of water with a sharp, serrated edge, then the precipice topples over perhaps on one side, and at some other part of the wave, where you least expect it, the water suddenly leaps up in a confused way. If this leaping of the water takes place at the crest of a wave when the wind is strong the leaping crest is sure to be carried off in spray. When the wind is very regular and very strong at the same time, the 'white horses' will be out, or, in other words, the sea will appear to be covered almost exclusively with breakers, but they are less crowded in reality than they appear to be when brought so close together in perspective. Imagine a level plain, where the fields are divided by hedges; if the spectator is just high enough to see over these, but not high enough to see the land between them, the country will seem to him to consist entirely of hedge-tops. A still better comparison, because there is motion, is that of a regiment marching towards you in companies. There is a considerable space between each two companies, but so long as the regiment is coming towards you they will seem to be all in one mass. If, however, you were situated like a reviewing officer when the companies are marching *past* him, you would see the intervals plainly; and if you can get into the same position with regard to storm-waves, you will perceive that they are separated by long spaces of comparatively level water, and also that the waves themselves are of very unequal height. I have before me an instantaneous photograph of storm-waves entering a bay in Scotland. The photographer had taken an excellent position from which the waves could be seen laterally, and he caught one just as it was passing him. Before and behind it are extensive spaces streaked with ripple, and heaving uneasily, but not rising into anything like a crest, and yet the wind is so powerful that on the opposite side of the bay a breaker dashing against a rock shoots in a heap of spray into the air as if from the explosion of a torpedo. The reader may have been surprised occasionally by the extreme ease with which a boat that is properly handled will take a dangerous-looking wave; the fact is, that the ascent of the watery hill, like that of a mountain, is longer than the foreshortening makes it appear, and the incline is not so steep. Another condition favourable to safety in rough seas is the interval that occurs between each *series* of great waves. I am not much of a believer in fixed numbers, as when a sailor tells you that there are three big waves and then a stretch of calm, or another sailor affirms that the ninth wave is always the most formidable, but I do see that the waves proceed by a sort of series, and that at intervals you have a bigger wave or a longer respite than before. There is even time for sharp and active sailors to do something for safety between the colossal waves.

The owner of a little yacht, *The Pet*, which circumnavigated Great Britain, after describing a scene of confusion in terrible weather, said, 'To crown all, a huge sea was on the point of coming on board. For a moment I thought she was gone. One flew to the jib-sheet and let it go; another seized the tiller, shipped it, and clapped it hard-a-lee; and then we all held on by the first rope we could catch, till the sea had passed. Happily the great monster went by us without mischief, and'—observe here the good use made of the interval—'*before another came the main-sheet was got in, the hatches were secured, the head-sheets were sheeted home, and the Pet was stalking away to windward as merrily as ever.*'

The forms of a breaking wave will be known to the reader in nature, and now they are preserved for our leisurely study in photographs. I believe nobody quite understands the exact reasons for the forms, but for such partial understanding as may be attainable it is essential to remember that no wave ever exists in river or sea in which the water is not constantly being changed for other water, which incessantly replaces it. The stationary wave of rocky streams, so well known to canoe travellers, is not composed of the same water for more than one or two seconds of time, and yet it seems almost motionless until some small floating thing is carried, in a twinkling, over it. On the open sea it is the wave that moves, but the water remains nearly stationary, except so far as it may have motion from the tide or a marine current. We cannot answer for the estimates of wave-speed made by others. The highest known to me is that made by Quatrefages of waves in the Bay of Biscay during a tempest in 1822. He estimated their speed at twenty metres a second, or about forty-five miles an hour. Half that speed would demolish the strongest vessel if the body of water were carried forward, instead of being constantly renewed. It is the confusion of the two ideas, the motion of the wave and the motion of the water, that makes the position of a ship having to beat to windward in rough water so much less perilous in reality than in appearance. The sailor knows that if her keel is deep enough to hold well, and her ballast heavy enough to enable her to strike powerfully against a wave, she will get to windward still.

The moment when a breaker is just beginning to curl over, before it takes its toppling plunge, is the most interesting in its existence. At that moment the water seems alive and conscious; it seems to gather itself as for intended action, to rise quivering with excitement to the utmost height possible to it, and then to poise and bend and bow itself till it falls with a curve and a crash and rushes in white foam down the slope of the dark wave-side, like a sudden cataract down a moun-

tain. The moment of the overhanging curve, just before the plunge, is imitated, as Mr. Campbell has pointed out in *Frost and Fire*, very accurately in overhanging snow-drifts, which are produced by the wind in the same way, the difference being that they are stationary, and that their substance is not changed. The same writer pursued the subject of wave-formation in sand, showing that sand, when dry, makes waves as steep as the sand talus will allow, but that 'when it is wetted and acquires more cohesion, it copies the form of the breaking sea-wave more nearly.'*

Instantaneous photography is not so valuable for stormy seas in sunshine as in dull weather, because it confounds foam and glitter, but the fidelity with which it renders minor waves is quite beyond all human rivalry. The excellent photographs of yachts in motion, which are now so common, contain endless and most authentic information about all kinds of minor waves and ripples. A collection of them is even better than nature itself, so far as form only is concerned, for no memory can retain the natural forms with any approach to photographic accuracy. Painters make constant use of these invaluable memoranda, and by their help and the education they give to the eye in preparing it to see nature itself, a greatly increased veracity in the drawing of water has penetrated even our current newspaper illustrations.

It is unnecessary to dwell upon the effects of light breezes upon a calm sea as they are exactly the same as upon lakes, which have been treated with some fullness in this volume. When the sea is almost entirely enclosed by land, as in the fiords of Norway and the salt-water lochs of Scotland, its surfaces are subject to precisely the same changes as the surfaces of freshwater lakes. The only essential differences are in motions caused by tides, and in the greater desolation of salty shores. There are, however, some salt-water lochs where the wood is rich enough for the boughs to overhang the sea. Macculloch observed this in Loch Killisport, 'rich with rocks and wood; trees growing from the very sea and feathering over the green wave.' Loch Swin, too, is rich in fir-woods that descend to the water's edge in its picturesque rocky bays. In Loch Craignish the islands are finely adorned with ancient oaks, 'perched about the rocks or high on their summits, or stuck in some fissure of a cliff and hanging down their knotted and bending branches into the very sea.'

When the woods flourish well and the scenery is rich in mountains and

* 'Near a pool of water, damp sand forms a perpendicular or overhanging wall on the sheltered side, and a slope where the bank is exposed. All these sand-forms are but modifications of wave-forms, and copies of air-waves; and they may be seen wherever there is drifting sand.'—*Frost and Fire*, chapter xlix.

islands there is nothing to mark the difference between a fiord and a fresh-water lake except the margin of shore left bare by the tide and the odour of the sea. Even the presence of sea-birds does not mark the distinction, as they are common on fresh-water lakes at no great distance from the sea, and even far inland on the long Continental rivers. Everything, therefore, which has been said in this volume about the scenery of fresh-water lakes is applicable to inlets of the sea when the local geology is of the same kind, and such inlets are frequently so shut in by their windings as to seem perfectly enclosed by land. Macculloch said that Loch Duich suggested the sea so little that were it not for the weeds that skirt the rocks at low water it would be difficult to imagine that it was a branch of the sea. Loch Scavig exactly resembles a lake amongst precipitous mountains. 'This singular basin affords an anchorage, the most extraordinary perhaps in the world. Embosomed in the midst of high mountains, excluded from the sight of the sea, surrounded with lofty precipices far overtopping the mast, and floating upon the dark and glassy surface, on which not a billow heaves to betray its nature, we seem suddenly transferred to some mountain lake, as if anchored among the ridges of the Alps.'* The 'dark and glassy surface on which not a billow heaves to betray its nature' does not visibly differ from that of a fresh-water lake overshadowed by gloomy mountains.

Much might be written about the colour of the sea, but to describe that is a painter's business, or if some account of it is given in literature it should be occasional only, as the effort of imagining colours must very soon weary the reader. The best descriptions of the sea, so far as colour is concerned, are those of William Black, who has ventured more boldly than any other writer into that wonder-world of magical effects which seems unreal whilst it is before our eyes and quite incredible afterwards.

Since a water-surface takes colouring by reflection more easily from the sky than a land-surface there is always the probability that a marine view will be coloured more harmoniously than a land view. The only obstacle to complete harmony must come from the colour of the water itself, and this is antagonistic to beauty only when charged with sand and mud in shallow seas near land. Whenever sea-water is clear it is sure to be either green or blue, or an intermediate colour that changes easily to either and affords the loveliest play of uncertain tints. My experience is limited to green seas that turn blue by reflection, those that have an intense azure of their own will probably modify sky-reflections more decidedly. Still, in any case, pure sea-water will accept from the sky the laws of its incessant change; it will follow the sky's fashions with a difference, and the difference

* Macculloch's *Highlands and Western Isles of Scotland*, Vol. III.

will not diminish either the interest or the beauty of the picture. Our green seas look blue under an azure sky, on a bright day with clouds they will show streaks of green, under a grey rain-cloud they are of a greenish grey, under a black thunder-cloud the green and the grey deepen, but still are not comparable to the fearful gloom of peat-water. The powerful colours of sunset have strength enough to overcome local colour in calm water and be reflected in all their intensity of crimson and gold till the sea-surface is like flame, as in the 'Ulysses deriding Polyphemus' of Turner. On such occasions the most complete and magnificent harmonies are established between sea and sky, and the most elaborate of Nature's colour-symphonies are played *à grand orchestre*.

Besides its reflection of colour a great water-surface reflects light with great intensity and multiplies it on many luminous points, producing the very familiar but always splendid and striking appearance of a glittering path along the deep, reaching from the spectator to a point beneath the sun or moon, and spreading often to right and left in streaks of brilliance, according to the state of the surface-ripples. In absolute calm this does not exist, the image of the orb is simply reproduced in the water, and in rough weather the reflections are no more than a disconnected scattering of unquiet light upon the waves. The perfection of this gilding or silvering of the sea is to be found, in calm weather, with faint local breezes that gently disturb the surface here and there, and produce capriciously changing designs upon the water, sometimes in broad streaks, sometimes in separated spaces, and sometimes breaking away to right or left in points of sparkle, less and less concentrated.* The effect is so beautiful that it suggests the notion of a shining path, leading to some land of the ideal. This was prettily expressed by Moore in one of his *Irish Melodies*:—

> 'And, as I watch the line of light that plays
> Along the smooth wave tow'rd the burning west,
> I long to tread that golden path of rays,
> And think 'twould lead to some bright isle of rest.'

The only effect of sparkle upon the sea at all comparable to this is the sparkle produced by phosphorescence, but this, though extremely beautiful, is not on a sufficiently large scale to affect the broad views of the sea that concern us, except when on a dark windy night the crests of breaking waves show themselves in a pale light of their own, which

* The proper way to take memoranda of these effects is to take them in *negative*, that is, to consider dark as representing light. Every dark pencil touch then stands for a touch of light, and memoranda of considerable fidelity may be obtained with little trouble. White chalk is too blunt, and Chinese white, which requires a brush, is not so handy as the pencil.

is not without a certain weird and awful beauty. At the same time the wake of your ship is filled with a succession of sparkling diamonds that shine with an intense though transient radiance in the luminous foam, and in the black water on each side of it. The finest phosphorescence I remember seeing was during a little voyage in an open boat off the west coast of Scotland. The wind had fallen and all night long we had to trust to our oars; there was a long trail of diamonds behind the rudder, and every time an oar was dipped it rose luminous and dropping lambent fire:—

'The elfish light
Fell off in hoary flakes.'

I have spoken hitherto almost exclusively of the open sea, but in pictorial art it is usually avoided. The calm, open sea, without ships, under a sky without clouds, is *never* painted; a disturbed sea, under a clouded sky, is sometimes painted; a sea, with shipping and coast scenery, is the usual subject of the marine artist. Here, again, we come upon that ingenious craft of the painter by which he conveys the idea that he has for his principal subject something that occupies but a small part of his canvas. As Corot would paint a lake and avoid it at the same time, as Constable would paint a cornfield that really occupied but a few square inches in a large canvas where trees and rough ground were predominant, so the marine painter often enriches his picture with so much shipping and so much landscape that the sea itself becomes scarcely more than an excuse or a vehicle for the rest. It floats the ships, it beats upon the shore, it explains the action of busy groups of fishermen, the danger of those upon a wreck, the admirable energy of the crew that are hurrying to the lifeboat. Lands and lives that would be tame and dull without the ocean are made picturesque and heroic by its neighbourhood. Gently undulating chalk downs are cut into perpendicular precipices that have a sublimity comparable to mountains. Sandstone hidden under Yorkshire farms is made manifest in the headlands of the coast, the granite of Cornwall seems built like a bulwark in the sea. In the Western Isles and elsewhere many a basaltic cliff owes its majesty to marine denudation that has made its columns visible, and the grandeur of Staffa is enhanced by the deep-green billows that thunder in its inmost caves. The very dullness of level sea-shores is not like inland dullness, it has still a character of sublimity. Imagine miles and miles of level sand, like the Lancaster sands when the tide is out; can anything be more dreary, more desolate, more perfectly in accordance with the sad traditions of those who have perished there? Is any landscape in

England so melancholy as the flat and treeless coast,—is anything in France so depressing as the long grey stretch of land that terminates in Cape Grisnez? When you have turned your back to the village of Scheveningen, and have before you the North Sea, the cheerfulness of the green Dutch fields is over. 'For one who has only seen the Mediterranean,' says De Amicis, 'the sight of this sea and this beach awakens new and deep feelings. The shore is all covered with pale sand of the very finest texture, on which advances and retires, like a carpet continually unrolled and rolled again, the last border of the wave. These sands reach to the feet of the first dunes, which are steep hillocks of sand, broken, corroded, and deformed by the eternal washing of the sea. Such is all the Dutch coast from the mouth of the Meuse to the Helder. There is not a bush or a blade of grass, nothing but water and sand, sterility and solitude.' The Italian writer intended this description to be simply dreary and sad; but is there not far more of real sublimity here than in all the fat polders of the Dutch farms, and is it not good evidence of the sublimating power of the sea that it is able to produce such an intensely melancholy landscape on the border of such a comfortable country?

The intense melancholy that is possible in coast scenery can rarely have been more powerfully felt than it was by one of my friends on the coast of Peru. He wished to reach a certain village, in a very thinly inhabited part of the country, and he set off imprudently alone for a ride of two days along the shore of the Pacific. He carried bags of provisions and water fastened to his saddle, and having never attempted the journey before, had nothing to guide him but this direction, that on the afternoon of the second day he would meet with an opening in the cliffs, and must then strike inland. He missed the opening, used up his food and water, and lay down to die on the sand, when he was saved by a mule-driver going to the very village that he sought. I have not space to tell the story as my friend tells it, but I may observe, that its most impressive element is the constant presence of the great Pacific on one hand, and the sterile, impenetrable wall of cliff upon the other. These two great presences come to weigh upon the hearer like a nightmare, though the sky was pure, the vast azure ocean heaving quietly and breaking with a gentle, monotonous murmur on the unending shore, and the lonely nights were illuminated by a resplendent moon.

It is not, however, these lonely coasts that painters most willingly illustrate. They prefer the evidences of man's presence in buildings on the shore and in ships upon the sea. It need hardly be observed, that

human construction of any kind at once relieves a landscape from that absence of chronology which is so oppressive in the open sea and sky. The painter who represents such a subject as Dover includes an ancient castle, a modern fortress, and a town which is at the same time ancient by its history, and modern by its present buildings. The shipping must be inevitably of our own time, as the generations of ships are renewed not less frequently than the generations of men. It follows as an inevitable necessity that all marine subjects which include shipping are sure to have chronology, and that their date will be that of the painter's lifetime. Claude may adorn his landscapes with the columns and shattered architecture of an antique temple, but his shipping is that of the seventeenth century. Turner may feel a romantic interest in the old ecclesiastical ruin that crowns the cliff at Whitby, or in the military remains that adorn the headland at Scarborough, but in his drawings of both places the waves will bear shipping of the glorious Nelson days. In this way the work of the marine painter is not dateless like water and sky, but is often more visibly chronological than that of one who studies inland landscape. It is remarkable, too, how much less frequently a marine painter will represent the shipping of past centuries than a painter of what is called 'genre' will attempt to resuscitate their ceremonial or domestic life. For one picture of mediaeval shipping you have a hundred of personages dressed in mediaeval costume, and surrounded by mediaeval furniture. I am not aware that Stanfield ever painted one of those magnificent, high-pooped vessels that were the pride of Henry VIII. of England or Francis I. of France, with their richly patterned sails and their rows of emblazoned shields, but he painted the *Victory* with shattered masts and wounded sides as she was towed to Gibraltar with the body of Nelson on board. This love of what is contemporary, or nearly so, gives to the works of marine painters a peculiar interest as records after a certain lapse of time. William Vandevelde may be intending simply to paint an effect of calm at sea, but to make the tranquillity of the surface more strongly felt he paints a man-of-war firing a gun, and you see the high old-fashioned poop rising over the smoke, and you have the great prow, and the upward-inclined bowsprit, and the quaint little vertical mast perched at the end of it, a complete piece of maritime archaeology that the painter did not consciously intend to place on record. In the same way Turner's great English ships of the line have already become archaeological. They have vanished from the real sea to live in future only on silent seas of art. Nobody will ever hear again what our grandfathers understood by a broadside. If there is any available pictorial poetry in the massive ugliness of our costly and ponderous

ironclads, it is time for it to be placed on record, as the day may not be very far distant when they will roll and plunge no more.

There is not space in a book on landscape to enter into the questions that concern the elements of beauty in ships and boats, a subject which has an especial interest for me, and which I have treated at some length elsewhere, with the help of necessary illustration.* I may briefly observe, however, that on sea as on land we find the two opposite and incompatible qualities of classical and picturesque beauty. The ancient Greeks never possessed anything like a modern sailing yacht, and yet it might easily be shown that it is constructed in the Hellenic spirit. The beauty of it, like that of the nude human figure, is in the good form and harmonious proportions of its necessary parts; the splendour of a ship in the days of Henry VIII. was due chiefly to added ornament in carving and gilding, rich banners and painted sails. The principle of the one is that of a Greek statue, the principle of the other is that of Queen Elizabeth's costumes. That was the splendid picturesque, but in our time the splendid picturesque has entirely vanished from the sea, and nothing is left to us of any artistic interest but the pure and severe beauty of yachts and other vessels designed on their principles, or else the impoverished picturesque of fishing-boats and other hardly-used craft, which is in great measure dependent on their being more or less out of repair. These boats are on the sea what picturesque cottages with thatched and patched and mossy roofs are in village scenery, delightful to look upon, and never so delightful as when the owners are very poor. Amongst the figures that the picturesque artist seizes upon in coast scenery, none are so agreeable to his taste as the poorest fisher-folk going about their battered old boats. This is not simply because the boats offer interesting shapes and good colour of red tanned sails and tarry hulls, there is a deeper reason, which is the pathos of the hard and struggling lives—a pathos that is entirely absent (so far as anything visible, and therefore paintable, is concerned) from the lives of the luxurious people who keep tidy and well-appointed yachts. I remember seeing this pathos of the fisherman's existence in its most touching form. On a wild morning in winter, at the height of a great storm, two fishing-boats were cast on a shoal, near enough to the coast to be distinctly seen, but too far for any chance of safety. The great pale yellow, yeasty waves broke over the boats, and the men took refuge on the masts. It was clear they could not hold out for long, and their wives and daughters stood in a piteous group, helplessly watching. It was, however, a lifeboat station, and

* In a series of illustrated articles which appeared in the *Portfolio* for the year 1881, and were afterwards reproduced in the French nautical journal, *Le Yacht*.

FISHING-BOATS

Painted by J. M. W. TURNER, R.A.

Engraved in line by *E. P. BRANDARD*

I have noticed, in speaking about Turner's illustrations of the Rivers of France, what a remarkably strong preference he had for the works of man, in towns and bridges, to the scenes of solitary nature; and I said something about his taste for occupied groups of numerous figures in the foreground, contrasting it with Girtin's contentment with a few figures, or none. The same desire for the presence of man and his works is to be found in Turner's marine subjects. The marine pictures that he preferred to paint were either close to harbours, where he could introduce both ships and small boats, or if out at sea they were connected with human action of some kind, as in the tragic scene of the 'Slave Ship.' In the work before us the tumultuous sea is one of the finest that Turner ever painted, but he could not leave it with only sky and beach, so we have a number of fishermen afloat and ashore, most of them in a state of intense activity, but one tranquilly smoking the pipe of peace and observing the weather to windward. The boat on the sand, with the fishermen pushing and pulling it, is one of the best of Turner's arrangements of figures about a rough and picturesque craft of this kind. The sea is relieved in light against the sky towards the large fishing-boat, and in dark to the left. The mast of the near boat is repeated in the one at sea, and the slope of the beach is repeated more definitely in the stretched hawser.

from my post at the end of the jetty I could see the rapid preparations, the hasty launch, the struggle against the first great breakers, all for the time invisible by the fishermen and their friends. They were saved, and I witnessed with dimmed eyes a meeting never to be forgotten. I have also seen the pale corpses of the drowned taken home to their poor cottages by grave bearers in the chill grey early light, the wind still fiercely howling, and the wild sea plunging behind them. These are but commonplace experiences on our coasts, yet they are enough to make us feel a pathetic interest in the fishing population ever afterwards.

There are two states of the sky in which cloud-forms are not visible, the pure open sky and the perfect cloud-canopy which roofs in all the visible earth from horizon to horizon. I happen to be writing this page on a day when this cloud-canopy prevails and in a house commanding wide views in every direction. The grey sky is absolutely devoid of form, and there is even less variety in it than in the cloudless blue of summer; for then there is strong gradation, and the sun is visible somewhere. To-day the gradation is so slight as to be almost imperceptible. Now these two formless conditions of the sky are certainly more wearisome at sea than on the land, because on land we have the forms of earth and vegetation to interest us. When we come to those skies which present strongly designed forms and colouring that is always varied and often splendid, with powerful oppositions of light-and-shade — in a word, a combination of all the qualities that give interest to a sky, then the effects on sea and land will differ in another way. At sea the cloud-forms are the only forms except those of the monotonous waves, on land they come amongst or above other forms which are permanent and so familiar as to be sometimes even wearisome. It is by the relief given to the tiresomeness of permanent objects that the moving scenery of cloud-land is so valuable to mankind. If the reader has ever lived six or eight weeks at a time under a blue southern sky with no change but the creeping shadows in sharp-cut hill and heated aridity of rock he may have begun to suffer from the nostalgia of cloudland, the painful longing for that changeful magnificence of the heavens which relieves the tedium of the earth. But this is not all. It constantly happens that cloud-forms enter into combinations with land-forms of such a nature as to conceal their defects or greatly to enhance their beauties. Many a landscape in mountainous countries is unpaintable without clouds from the pictorial awkwardness of its lines, whereas it suddenly becomes beautiful when those lines are broken by a rain-cloud which substitutes a far better outline of its own. A mountain, in fine weather, may be unfortunately isolated, but

clouds may rise in the distance that may give it the needed repetition or companionship. A great steep front of mountain may be simply oppressive when a belt of rising mist may relieve its oppressiveness at once and give its higher parts an all but aërial lightness. The restless outlines of distant purple peaks against a yellow western sky may be tranquillised into evening peace by the long straight edge of quiet grey cloud above them. There is, indeed, hardly any service, of the artistic kind, that clouds may not render to the landscape of hill and plain. They come to the dullest and dreariest of scenes like the splendid cortége of an Oriental sovereign who traverses some miserable village. We, in our time, have been especially and exceptionally favoured. For some reason that men of science have not hitherto been able to explain in such a manner as to establish any agreement amongst themselves, the condition of the atmosphere in the late autumn of 1883 was so exceptional as to produce afterglows that seemed to us almost supernatural. They did, at least, bear the same relation to the afterglows we had known before that the most extraordinary gifts of genius may bear to the common abilities of men. Their essential quality was a marvellous increase of glowing light that changed mere colour into moving and living flame. The afterglow has always been interesting and readily associated in the human spirit with feelings of tender regret and yearning aspiration ; it has often been a time of rich and glowing pictorial effect ; but never in the experience of living men has it been comparable to what we have now learned about its possibilities. I have been a careful observer of skies for thirty years, and am able without the slightest risk of error to affirm that the afterglow in the evening of Christmas Day 1883 was, in the essential qualities of glowing light and combined splendour and richness of colour, the most wondrous that I ever beheld. I saw it in a hilly country, and the luminous greens and saffron of the sky were made brighter by contrast with the richest purple in the mountains, whilst the whole earth seemed to be lighted with a palpitating, powerful, and almost supernatural rosy radiance as of some new and wonderful aurora. I took no notes, being far too completely overwhelmed to think of taking notes, and did not even mentally record the order of the changes. The effect on my mind was that of the profoundest awe, mingled with ineffable gladness. It is a great thing to have lived during that year and seen Nature surpass herself so far.

In the autumn of 1884 there was a feebler repetition of the same phenomena, and I took some notes of afterglows that were slow enough in their phases to permit a few hasty memoranda. Here is a rough but faithful description of one exactly as it occurred on the 28th of September in that year.

1. The sun has disappeared for about twenty minutes, and the afterglow is just beginning to display some intensity of effect. The sky is of a suffused lemon-yellow, the distant hills are a pale beautiful grey, harmonising wonderfully with the sky, as if the sky colour suffused the magical atmosphere and bathed the distant grey, which is still grey, notwithstanding.

At this time the sky is full of bright internal light, not dead, but moving and changing, now brighter, now duller, almost as the aurora borealis changes, or like the *crescendo* and *diminuendo* in music.

2. The yellow deepens gradually, the earth darkens. Rays or pencils of light begin to be visible, softly arising from what was the place of the sun. A tinge of the faintest rose-colour is beginning to appear above the yellow.

3. The yellow has deepened to orange. The rose-colour has increased in intensity, and now, by contrast, rather strong greens begin to appear in the sky, especially between the afterglow and the moon. Round about the horizon there is a good deal of rose-colour, but it is generally tender and delicate; that above the place of the sun is extremely luminous and powerful.

4. The rosy colour fades, the yellow becomes more and more orange, till finally it is completely orange. The leaves of trees show against it in dark, and all small twigs, &c., are distinctly detached from it.

5. The orange becomes red at the horizon (not rose), graduated upwards through orange and yellow to green and blue.

6. The red and orange fade very gradually, losing their luminosity until finally a comparative darkness comes on, leaving only a soft, low-toned glow, like an old picture. The hills changed colour with every change in the sky, losing their magical grey, and becoming darker and more purely blue. In this last phase that just precedes the brightening of the moon, the hills in the west are coloured like a distance by Titian.

THE END.

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